

Kim Il Sung as Machiavelli's New Prince:

The early development of North Korean regime

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<p>Tutkielma käsittelee Kim Il Sungin nousua Pohjois-Korean johtajaksi ja maan hallinnon varhaista kehitystä 1940 - 1950-luvuilla Neuvostoliiton ohjauksessa, ja päättyä ajallisesti Korean sodan lopputulemiin 1950-luvun puolivälissä. Tämän lisäksi se tarkastelee valtion ja hallinnon erikoislaatuisia piirteitä: Pohjois-Korean autokraattista systeemiä, eristäytyneisyyttä, yhteiskunnan hierarkkisia luokkia, sekä Kim dynastian persoonallisuuskulttia ja tutkii niiden alkuperää ja funktiota yhteiskunnassa. Tutkielma käsittelee osittain myös Korean varhaisempaa kehitystä Joseon dynastian loppupuolella ja siirtomaa-aikaa Japanin alaisuudessa, koska ne loivat otolliset olosuhteet Kim Il Sungin nousulle ja sosialistiselle vallankumoukselle Pohjois-Koreassa.</p> <p>Tutkielman päätarkastelukohde on Pohjois-Korean ensimmäinen diktaattori, Kim Il Sung, ja se, miten Neuvostoliitto käytti häntä itselleen hyödyllisen puskurivaltion pystyttämiseen Korean niemimaalle torjumaan Yhdysvaltojen ja Japanin muodostamaa uhkaa alueella. Tutkielmassa on käytetty teoriana Machiavellin ajatuksia politiikasta, mitkä on koostettu "Ruhtinaasta" ja "Valtiollisista mietelmistä". <i>Ruhtinas</i> tarkastelee ja esittelee keinoja yksinvaltiuden saavuttamiseksi ja <i>Valtiolliset mietelmät</i>, kestävän valtion pystyttämisestä, johon valikoitiin kohdat, jotka käsittelevät, tai pitävät myös paikkansa autokratioissa. Tutkielman Pohjois-Koreaa käsittelevä aineisto koostuu englanninkielisestä tutkimuskirjallisuudesta, sekä länsimaisilta että aasialaisilta tutkijoilta, salauksesta poistetuista virallisista selonteista ja muista tutkielmista, julkilausumista ja nettilähteistä. Machiavellia käsittelevä aineisto koostuu myös tutkimuskirjallisuudesta, <i>Ruhtinaan</i> ja <i>Valtiollisten mietelmien</i> useammasta englanninkielisestä käännöksestä, sekä nettilähteistä.</p> <p>Tutkielmassa tullaan siihen lopputulokseen, että Kim Il Sung omasi monia <i>Ruhtinaassa</i> ylistettyjä yksinvaltiaan ominaisuuksia, ja Neuvostoliiton ja tämän yhteistyö Pohjois-Korean itsenäisen ja kestävän valtion pystyttämiseksi noudattaa monia Machiavellin ohjenuoria sekä <i>Ruhtinaassa</i> että <i>Valtiollisissa mietelmissä</i>. Monet Pohjois-Korean hallinnon erityispiirteistä ovat myös loogisen kehityskulun tulosta, joista osa pohjaa vanhemmille korealaisille tendensseille (eristäytyminen, luokkayhteiskunta, monarkia). Osalla on juuret Korean historiassa, mutta ne ovat muuttuneet tavoilla, jotka tukevat nykyisen järjestelmän ja hallinnon vallassa pysymistä (monarkiaasta absoluuttiseen monarkiaan, sosiaalisen hierarkian uudelleenjärjestys) ja joista Kim dynastian persoonallisuuskulttia voi pitää aidosti Pohjois-Korealaisena erityispiirteenä. Vaikka kultti on saanut vaikutteita monista lähteistä, se on systeeminä uniikki, jonka funktio on laillistaa ja kannatella Kim dynastian vallassa pysymistä.</p>			
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Abbreviations

CCP Chinese Communist Party

CPKI Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence

DPKR Democratic People's Republic of Korea

DoS Department of State (United States)

DYL Democratic Youth League

KCP Korean Communist Party

KPA Korean People's Army

KPG Korean Provisional Government

NEAJUA Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army

NKCP North Korean Communist Party

NKPPC North Korean Provisional People's Committee

NKWP Northern Korean Workers' Party

PC People's Committee

ROK Republic of Korea

ROKA Republic of Korea Army

SCA Soviet Civil Administration

SPA Supreme People's Assembly

SWNCC State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee

UN United Nations

UNTOCK United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea

U.S. United States

USSR Union of Soviet Socialist Republic

Introduction

North Korea is an interesting state which rose again to the world's headlines after a series of missile and nuclear tests following the accession of the Kim Jong Un. If news articles about North Korea do not discuss its latest weapon tests, they usually focus on the scandalous things about the state, like Kim family's cult of personality. Some have called North Korea a crazy state, which perhaps refers more toward its actions than the system itself but describing it crazy is still rather an example of willful ignorance or an attempt to influence the way people perceive it, than well-thought argument. North Korea, however, is weird by modern western standards for states. It is autocratic, dynastic, militaristic, and highly centralized one-party state where in practice all the power is concentrated on the hands of the leader of the country, who always comes from the Kim family. The nation is isolationistic, and the state's official Juche ideology stouts independence and self-sufficiency, which sounds rather old fashioned in the current globally interconnected world. As Lankov has noted, North Korea is kind of a living political fossil (Lankov, 2013, p. xi) from the Cold War era, which despite of westerners' predictions about its imminent fall, has continued to exist when other Stalinist dictatorships, including Soviet Union, have passed on.

While focus on the nuclear weapons is understandable, we cannot understand North Korea if we focus solely on them or continue to marvel (negatively) the clickbait features about the regime. If we want to understand North Korea and why it acts "crazily", and in my opinion understanding small bellicose dictatorship with nuclear weapons is important, we must look its past to understand why it developed to the state it is currently. There are few persons without whom there would not be North Korea as we know it, namely Kim Il Sung, the founder of the state and Kim dynasty, and Stalin, Kim's enabler. Kim Il Sung is also interesting character from wider perspective of strongman politics, because he is one of the few modern dictators who managed stay in power to create a lasting state and dynasty, and wriggle free from his sponsor's, Soviet Union, control. Additionally, unfortunately it seems like strongman politics are again on the rise, so examining Kim Il Sung and how he became supreme leader, and what were its effects to North Korean society might be worthwhile and show us some clues or warning signs what to look out in budding dictators.

Speaking of budding dictators, or tyrants, there is one western political thinker who was a real pioneer in this subject: Machiavelli. Although at first glance Kim Il Sung and Machiavelli have nothing to do with each other, Machiavelli studied in *The Prince* how a new ruler can acquire personal power and consolidate his position, while his other less known book the *Discourses* examines, among other things, what makes states stable. Accordingly, Kim Il Sung was a new ruler who managed, with Soviet help, to become an absolute ruler who created a hereditary state, which has overcome many difficulties and is still here. I hypothesize that Kim Il Sung's rise to power is a good case study of Machiavelli's political thoughts. In this work I examine the trajectory of Kim Il Sung's rise and how it fits the methods Machiavelli described in *The Prince* and the

Discourses, as well as analyze the North Korean regime from this viewpoint. I also examine in this work few of the conspicuous features of North Korea, which are tied to its regime: autocracy, hierarchical class system, cult of personality, and the state's isolationism. I try to trace them to find out their origins, possible development and function in the society, for if they do not have a function, I presume they would not exist anymore in North Korean society, which is not the case.

The timescale of this work is from last days of the Joseon dynasty till the end of the Korean War and its aftermath, though the focus will be in 1940s – 1950s. The length of the study is quite long, but because North Korea's history is controversial and so poorly known in the West, I considered it necessary to be rather too thorough than shallow. Machiavelli also is a very controversial political thinker and despite of being very famous, almost a cliché, he is surprisingly poorly understood. Thus, I have also examined the controversy about his thoughts on politics before piecing together the theory part of this work from *The Prince* and the *Discourses*. The work is divided roughly in four sections: overview about Machiavelli and his polemical thoughts, the theory, history of North Korea, and analysis. Source materials in this work include scientific studies from western and Asian researches, official (declassified) documents and declarations, internet sources, and Machiavelli's translated classic works.

1. Machiavelli's political thoughts

This chapter examines Machiavelli and I first summarizes his life and writings quickly before diving into the controversy about his political thoughts. I have used different editions of Machiavelli's books in this work but if it is not mentioned otherwise in the footnotes, the references point to the Collector's Library's 2004 edition of *The Prince* and Random House's 1950 edition of the *Discourses* in this work. For clarity's sake, for different editions of Machiavelli's works have wildly different page numbers, I have used also chapter numbers in *The Prince*'s references and book and chapter numbers in the *Discourses*, where the first number marks the book (1 – 3) and the second one the chapter.

1.1 Machiavelli and Florentine politics

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469 – 1527) was born in Florence, arguably one of the most important European cities of the 1500th century. Florence, as some other Italian cities, was an independent city-state, a rich and powerful nexus for trade, science and art. However, despite their shared freedom, trade, humanist ideology and language, Italian city-states warred against each other frequently with mercenary armies, and alliances and power positions were in constant flux, which made Italy weak towards foreign conquerors. While Venice managed to hold onto its republican constitution, Florence was for better part of 1500th century a republican state in name only. Since 1434 the city-state was controlled by the Medici family, first under Cosimo de' Medici, then his son Piero in 1464. Piero died five years later and was succeeded by his son Lorenzo, who earned a sobriquet "Magnificent". Despite their general success the Medici family lost Florence in 1494,

two years after Lorenzo's death, when Charles VIII of France invaded Italy and demanded free passage to Naples through Florence from Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici. Piero, known also as Piero the Unfortunate, had originally disturbed the political situation in Italy by allying Florence more tightly with Naples, which alarmed Milan, whose duke Ludovico Sforza in turn hatched a plan to acquire Naples with Charles VIII's help. To the young French monarch's surprise, Piero acceded to his every demand in later negotiations, without getting any kind of permission from Florence's official government "Signoria", or even informing them. Understandably the Signoria was angered and branded Piero as a traitor and with the help of the masses forced him to flee the city with his family. Medici's influence was replaced with Savonarola's, who was a charismatic Dominican friar and preacher. Savonarola criticized the rich and powerful in Florence and called for Christian renewal in the city-state. He managed to gain support of the masses and steer the city's policies for a while, but eventually angered the pope Alexander VI with his actions (or inactions against the king of France), and was excommunicated in 1497. Savonarola was imprisoned, tortured and executed soon after, and in 1498 the reins of the state were passed into Piero Soderini's hands.

Niccolò Machiavelli was born in 1469 to a Florentine republican minded middleclass family and received with his younger brother Totto the best education their father could afford, and were trained from early age in language, history and mathematics. In 1498, after Savonarola's fall, Machiavelli was appointed as a second chancellor of the Florentine republic. After ten months he was also made a secretary for Signoria's subcommittee, Ten of War, which was charged with Florence's foreign affairs, and 1506 he virtually became republic's defense minister (Berrige, 2001, p. 8). Although city-states often used condottieri in their conflicts, Machiavelli found them untrustworthy – a subject he returns to in many of his writings. He managed to persuade Soderini to back up his plan to create a native Florentine militia, which turned out to be a highlight of his career when the militia captured neighboring city of Pisa in 1509 after a series of earlier conflicts that had dragged on for 15 years. As Berrige has noted, Machiavelli's position in the government required him to travel often, not just in Italy, but as far as France and Germany too. He served Florence as *mandatari*, an envoy, whose duty was to observe, report and negotiate moderately important matters, where speed was essential, and prepare way for actual elected ambassadors. Berrige also emphasizes Hale's observation, that Machiavelli's position as a *mandatari*, not an ambassador, exposed him to "-- -- *the seamy side of international relations most clearly*". (Berrige, 2001, p.8) (Atkins, 2010). However, Machiavelli's luck soured soon when Medici family made a comeback to Florentine politics in 1512 with the help of Pope Julius II and a Spanish army. Piero Soderini was exiled, and Machiavelli lost his job. In 1513 he was arrested, imprisoned and tortured for a suspected complicity in a conspiracy against the Medici, although there is no evidence that he ever took part of such a plot. Although he was soon released, a cloud of suspicion followed Machiavelli for rest of his life, and despite his efforts he never again held a high position in Florentine government. Instead, he retired on the countryside and turned his attention to literary work.

1.2 Overview of Machiavelli's literary works

Without a doubt Machiavelli's most famous book is "The Prince" (*Il Principe*), which, for good and ill, has colored people's opinions about him as a political thinker. Many scholars think that the origins of *The Prince* lays in Machiavelli's correspondence with Francesco Vettori, a Florentine diplomat and Machiavelli's friend who, unlike Machiavelli, managed to survive the Medici family's comeback to Florentine politics relatively unscathed. Machiavelli tried to secure a job for himself under the Medici rule through Vettori, who was serving as city-state's ambassador for the papal court in 1513, but without tangible results. Instead, Vettori drew Machiavelli into a political debate in their correspondence, which ultimately gave birth to *The Prince*. (Atkinson, 2010, pp. 22 – 23). The book itself is dedicated to Piero de Medici's son Lorenzo, Lorenzo the Magnificent's grandson, but alas, it did not soften Medici family's opinion about Machiavelli. *The Prince* is a book that has caused much controversy since its publication in 1532¹. It was banned by the Catholic church in 1559, which, as it turned out, did not hinder its distribution around Europe – more likely the blacklisting made it just more alluring. *The Prince* popularized Machiavelli, and its influence extended from philosophy and political theory to popular culture, which can be still seen from Elizabethan dramas' concept of diabolic tyrants, to current pop culture's fancy towards "Machiavellian characters".

However, despite its popularity and reputation, one cannot get a well-rounded image of Machiavelli's thoughts on politics from *The Prince* alone. One of his other, longer books about politics is *Discourses on Livy* (*Discorsi sopra la prima deca ldi Tito Livio*) usually known only as "Discourses", which is composed from three books and all in all 142 chapters. *Discourses* is a commentary on Titus Livy's² "History of Rome" (*Ab Urbe Condita*). As Najemy points out, *Discourses* is not a systematic commentary on Livy's *History of Rome*, Machiavelli concentrates most on Livy's first ten books, and the chapters jump from topic to topic and seem a bit scattered. Some have theorized that he drafted first 18 chapters of *Discourses'* book one before *The Prince* because he states in *The Prince* that: "I will not discuss here the subject of republics, having treated of them at length elsewhere -- --". (*The Prince* 2, p. 12). Najemy however thinks that *Discourses* follows the *Prince*, because it looks like they establish together a critical and deconstructive dialogue, starting from the books' dedications (Najemy, 2010, p. 97). While *The Prince* is dedicated for Lorenzo de Medici, a prince, *Discourses* is dedicated for Machiavelli's friends Zanobi Buondelmonte and Cosimo Rucellai, to whom he writes, perhaps ironically: "In doing this, I give some proof of gratitude, although I may seem to have departed from the ordinary usage of writers, who generally dedicate their works for some prince; and, blinded by ambition or avarice, praise him for all the virtuous qualities he has not, instead of censuring him for his real vices, whilst I, to avoid this fault, do not address myself to such as are princes, but to those who by their

¹ Although the *Prince* was published posthumously it circled among Machiavelli's friends and other people as a manuscript while he was still alive.

² Titus Livy was a Roman historian who lived 64 or 59 BC – AD 12 or 17, and the *History of Rome* is his only surviving work.

infinite good qualities are worthy to be such -- --" (*Discourses*, 1 Greeting, p. 102). However, Najemy underlines that despite the preference for republics in *Discourses*, it and *The Prince* do not represent opposing political philosophies; republican liberty in *Discourses* and monarchy in *The Prince*, but their main difference is the way Machiavelli wrote about the same themes in both books (Najemy, 2010, p. 98).

Machiavelli's other works include Florentine History (*Istorie fiorentine*), a commission from the Medici family that he got in 1520 thanks to his friend Orti Olicellari (Cabrini, 2010 p. 128) and *Art of War* (*Dell'Arte della guerra*), which is more military orientated than his other works, and according Korvela, already outdated when it was published in 1521 (Korvela, 2007, p. 23). It is also the only one of Machiavelli's books that was printed during his lifetime (Atkinson, 2010, p. 24), but also one of his least studied ones (Hörnqvist, 2010, p. 112). Machiavelli also wrote a bibliography on Tuscan condottiere Castruccio Castracani, and as a learned Renaissance man, wrote both poetry and plays, among which a comedy called *Mandrake Root* (*Mandragola*) is perhaps the most famous one. Other sources that reflect his later ideas about politics are the official reports and letters Machiavelli wrote to Florentine government during his civil servant years, as well as his lifelong correspondence with likeminded individuals, which served among other things as a soundboard for his analysis on politics.

1.3 Machiavelli's problematic political thoughts

Despite it has been almost 500 years from Machiavelli's death, based on the amount of commentary books and articles, the man's thoughts still seem to interest scientific community. A problem that plagues Machiavelli is that at first glance his ideas about politics look contradictory – with enough searching, there seems to be Machiavelli for everyone. Depending on which of his book one reads, there seems to be starkly different opinions about how states should be governed. He has been seen at the same time an advocate of tyranny, as well as a champion of republicanism. The reader gets a very different picture of Machiavelli's thoughts from the *Discourses*, compared to the ones he or she gets from *The Prince*, not to even mention all the secondary books people have written about the man and his works. However, because *The Prince* is Machiavelli's most read and debated book, a lion's share of this chapter concentrates on it too.

What makes Machiavelli even more interesting, is that this dichotomy does not rise just from a selective reading of his works alone, but even *The Prince*, which is often seen as a tyrant's handbook, divides people's opinions about the man. According Benner, since its publication there have been people who have thought *The Prince* as: "-- -- a godless handbook for tyrants" (2013, p. xx) and those who thought that the book's purposes were in fact moral, that it: "-- -- surreptitiously defended justice, virtue, and civility -- --" (ibid). Benedict Spinoza argued that all things considered, Machiavelli's intention was to warn people not to hand their fates to tyrannical rulers, whose means he described so acutely, even if they longed for a strong leader – a savior. Albiero Gentili echoed this stance and said that *The Prince* sought to bare rulers' tyrannical

dispositions and expose their corrupted ways. (Benner, p. xxxi). As we can see, Machiavelli is hard to pin down and people's opinions about him vary wildly. In his book "a History of Western Political Thought" J.S. McClelland argues that there are broadly five possible reasons for the continuing interest towards Machiavelli, which are;

1. Machiavelli's shocking ideas about politics
2. How the writing style of the Prince ignores the norms of its genre
3. Machiavelli's supposed wickedness that his own life emphasizes
4. Anti-Machiavels
5. Murkiness between politics and ethics in his political thinking. (McClelland, 1996, pp. 151 – 157).

McClelland does not explicitly claim that the shock factor, or the continuing interest towards Machiavelli stems solely from *The Prince*, but it can be clearly read between the lines in his book. Fortunately, he also notes that most vocal anti-Machiavels often have only read *The Prince* (McClelland p. 154 – 155), which as I stated earlier, gives rather unbalanced view on Machiavelli's political thoughts. Others have given different reasons than McClelland for the continuing interest towards Machiavelli, but because they often have some relation to his points, for clarity's sake, I use his as a backbone to introduce them also.

McClelland's first explanation for continuing interest towards Machiavelli is that many readers have found his writings about politics profoundly shocking. The way Machiavelli seems to instruct tyrants in their games for power, according to McClelland, creates the base of Machiavellianism. Machiavellianism, according Korab-Karbowic, is a radical type of political realism that denies the relevance of morality in politics and claims that every mean is acceptable to achieve some political ends (Korab-Karbowic, 2018).³ Machiavellianism, however, is a torso of Machiavelli's thoughts, where his ideas from *The Prince* are squeezed into a peculiar mold, especially in popular writing⁴, which is perhaps best described with a gleefully uttered catchphrase "end justifies means". Ironically enough, Machiavelli himself never wrote this exact slogan in his books, although he is often saddled with it, but discussed the topic e.g. in *The Prince's* chapter 8: "Of such as have achieved sovereignty by means of crime" and in the *Discourses*, where he e.g. says: "*It is well that, when the act accuses him, the result should excuse him; and when the result is good, as in the case of Romulus, it will always absolve him from blame. For he is to be reprehended who commits violence for the purpose of destroying, and not he who employs it for beneficent purposes.*" (*Discourses* 1.9 p. 139).

The other possible source of continuing interest towards Machiavelli, McClelland finds, is how *The Prince* is written, not the message the book holds itself. *The Prince* belongs to a mirror of princes-literature, a genre

³ See also e.g. Machiavellian in Cambridge Dictionary: "using clever but often dishonest methods that deceive people so that you can win power or control". <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/machiavellian> (visited 20.7.18)

⁴ Look e.g. "How to become Modern Day Machiavelli and Sun Tzu and slaughter your competition in Business" M. Schwatz (2018) or Bruner T. & Eager P. "Modern Machiavelli: 13 Laws of Power, Persuasion and Integrity" (2017).

of books that sought to advise rulers how to do their job, and warn them, what happens if they fail. Some of these books offered indirect advises through historical examples of different rulers, while others were more straightforward handbooks filled with rules and maxims. (Benner, 2013 p. xxix). Skinner argues that while *The Prince* has many convergences with conventional mirror of princes' books, e.g. the role of unpredictable fortune and its counterpower virtù, it differs from them greatly in two ways. First, it emphasizes the role of sheer force in the conduct of government, i.e. military power, that other "mirrors" rarely heeded and secondly, it questions the earlier mirrors' assumptions about virtù and its role in political life. Another, lesser, way that Machiavelli's *The Prince* differs from conventional mirrors, is that he does not pay much attention to the prince's education, except that the prince should study the art of war and the organization and discipline of his army (*The Prince* 14). (Skinner, 1978, pp. 118 – 122, 128 – 130).

On Skinner's opinion the concept of virtù that Machiavelli criticized in *The Prince*, and replaced with his own interpretation, had gained two main contentions in humanist tradition of moral and political thought. First was that virtù was understood as a quality that enables a ruler to attain his noblest ends, and secondly, the possession of virtù was equated with the possession of all major virtues. These widely accepted arguments led to a situation where majority of leading theorists of princely government thought that: "-- -- if a ruler wishes to 'maintain his state' and achieve the goals of honor, glory and fame, he needs above all to cultivate the full range of Cristian as well as moral virtues." (Skinner, 1978, p. 131). Machiavelli makes his opinion clear about the merits of following the conventional princely virtues in *The Prince's* chapters 15 – 18. In chapter 15 he argues that a good man will rather meet ruin than safety if he does solely act upon his moral code, because majority of people do not live as morally as he does. In chapters 16 – 18, which original Latin titles were 'De Liberalitate et parsimonia' (Generosity and Parsimony), 'De Crudelitate et pietate' (Cruelty and Compassion) and 'Quomodo fides a principibus sit servanda' (How princes should honor their word)⁵ (Skinner, 1978 p. 133), he compares where the virtues and their opposing vices can lead, and finds the vices far better for princely governments than the old virtues.

Machiavelli did not disagree with the goal of conventional mirror for princes' books: maintaining one's state and achieving honor, glory and fame, but very much with their ways to achieve them. In the same vein, Machiavelli does not say that the princely virtues are not good or worthwhile, rather they are praiseworthy qualities, but following only them is very risky for a prince. Also, unlike his contemporaries Machiavelli did not equate possessing one virtù as possessing all of them, for: "*I am well aware that it would be most praiseworthy for a prince to possess all of the above-named qualities⁶ that are esteemed good; but as he cannot have them all, nor entirely observe them, because of his human nature which does not permit it, he*

⁶ liberal, miserly, generous, rapacious, cruel, merciful, faithless, faithful, effeminate, pusillanimous, ferocious, brave, affable, haughty, lascivious, chaste, sincere, cunning, facile, inflexible, grave, frivolous, religious and skeptical. (ibid).

should at least be prudent enough to know how to avoid the infamy of those vices that would rob him of his state; and if possible also to guard against such as are likely to endanger it." (*The Prince* 15 p. 80). Machiavelli also does not encourage princes always to act bad or follow the vices but learn to do so when it is necessary for maintaining one's state.⁷ Thus, *The Prince* is shocking because it ignores the conventional moral assumptions of its time, not because its message itself, where it e.g. promotes monarchy as a form of government. In a similar vein, Benner thinks that there is one notable difference between *The Prince* and more conventional mirror of princes-books that were written during Machiavelli's time, that: "*-- sought to teach rulers how to be good monarchs, which meant above all how to avoid doing whatever leads to tyranny.*" According to Benner, in the conventional books a good monarchy was juxtaposed with tyranny, an opposition that Machiavelli seems to dispense with. This, together with some morally questionable advices the Prince offers, has led especially during 20th century to a, probably naïve, idea that Machiavelli's works cuts ties with all political morality. (Benner, 2013, p. xxx)

Speaking of tyranny, Machiavelli does not in fact mention the word at all in *The Prince*. This does not mean that he ignores the subject – *Discourses* have a lot to say about it for example, but its curious absence in *The Prince* has fascinated many scholars over the centuries and have created much debate around the subject. Benner argues that there are two main explanations for the absence of "tyranny" in *The Prince*. First is the one that e.g. Lerner has mentioned too, in this explanation people think that Machiavelli wanted to challenge the conventional moral-shackled language of political analysis via removing: "*-- -- the stigma attached to some of the methods usually associated with tyranny.*" (Benner, 2013, p. 15), so people could examine the down-, and upsides of these methods without automatically thinking that they are always bad. While this attitude caused an outcry after Machiavelli's death and few centuries later of being charged for "whitewashing of tyranny", it morphed in 19th and 20th century into a sympathetic view where *The Prince* was seen as: "*-- -- a pioneering treatise in the scientific, and thus amoral (though not necessary immoral) study in politics*" (Benner, 2013 p. 16). The second explanation is that *The Prince* is secretly pro-republican work; in this view Machiavelli's umbrella term "prince" in fact tars all the monarchs, and tyrants, with the same brush. Benner thinks that the true genius of Machiavelli's ambiguous writing (in *The Prince*) is that the book can be read both pro-tyrannical or amoral, as well as pro-republican and moral work. On Benner's opinion, Machiavelli shies away from moral wise black and white statements, which in a case of pro-republicanism would have been dangerous under the Medici rule, but also because he probably wanted to educate his readers for warning signs in leaders, to see the slippery slope of unlimited power and where it may descend (Benner, 2013, pp. 15 – 17).

⁷ "*For a man who, in all respects, will be apt to be ruined amongst so many who are evil. A prince therefore who desires to maintain himself must learn to be not always good, but to be so or not as necessity may require.*" (p. 79)

However, despite rising these two points; shocking message of *The Prince* or the way it ignores some of the widely agreed conventions of mirror of princes' literature, McClelland himself questions both reasons. On his opinion, Machiavelli's ideas are not exactly anything new. Machiavelli uses many instructive examples from antiquity and his own era in his works and urges would-be princes to try methods others have already tested and deemed successful, but he does not excuse them. In similar manner he dismisses the question of *The Prince's* audience, either the would-be princes or ordinary people who might get duped by tyrants, for "*-- -- why the people should be 'shocked' to find princes doing what the people are already supposed to be looking out for is not clear.*" (McClelland, 1996, pp. 151 – 152). In other words, Machiavelli did not invent these practices, what Machiavelli did was that he described, perhaps even defined policies that were already in use, and had been used for a long time but were not part of the formal writing of mirror of princes-literature. Likewise, on Lerner's opinion, even Machiavelli's so called *realistic*⁸ stance towards politics was not his own invention, he just expressed the realism that: "*-- -- characterized the actual politics and ethos of his time*" (Lerner, 1950, p. xxxi). Instead of this, Lerner praises Machiavelli's secession from moral, theological and idealistic shackles of conventional mirror for princes' literature, which I think falls under the McClelland's point two: how *The Prince* ignores some moral assumptions of its genre. However, this fresh view alone on Lerner's opinion, is not the key for *The Prince's* timelessness, for Machiavelli was also ahead of his times in two ways that came to play an important part in western politics. First is the idea of national unity, the idea of common language, culture and economic limits, and secondly, the need for "*-- -- concentration of power at the center in order to break down divisive barriers -- -- the methods by which unity could be achieved*". (Lerner, 1950, p. xxxiv). Machiavelli was not a nationalist as we understand it now, but as Atkinson has pointed out, he did lament the weakness of Italy that was plagued by factionalism, and yearned for a strong leader, a redeemer who could save all the country from power-hungry neighbors in *The Prince* (Atkinson, 2010, p.23).

According to Cox, *The Prince* also echoes an older ethical "realism" that can be found from the deliberative rhetoric genre, which in its starkest form was more about power than morality. Deliberative rhetoric, together with forensic and demonstrative one made up the three genres of classical rhetoric, which was for Machiavelli and his contemporaries rather a necessary skill to navigate in political sphere than empty verbiage. The three genres, a division dating to Aristotle, were used in different civic matters: the forensic in law courts, deliberative in political assemblies and demonstrative in ceremonial oratory. The conventional political advice books for princes used the flowery demonstrative rhetoric, and their task was rather to reaffirm societal values than genuinely advice princes. In princely governments, the deliberation on politics was more private issue, while the public political discourse was more demonstrative. All the three genres had different ethical characters, which were defined by their "ends" (fines). The forensic orator's end was justice,

⁸ As in political realism.

and the orator's goal was to demonstrate that his cause is just while his opponent's is unjust. Demonstrative rhetoric was defined by honorable or decent, while deliberative rhetoric's end was advantage, not justice or decency, but:" -- -- *what was materially beneficial to the state.*" (Cox, 2010, p. 178). In rhetoric sense, *The Prince's* radicalism is caused by that Machiavelli used a lean deliberative rhetoric in a political advice book meant for general circulation, which he makes clear right from the dedication of *The Prince*. This, according to Cox, was meant to signal: "-- -- *the urgency of his forthcoming argument and casting himself emphatically as an engaged political actor and not as an apologist or intellectual cheerleader.*" (ibid). In Cox's opinion, Machiavelli's politics are characterized with dynamism and improvisation to counter unpredictable fortune's blows, which were also crucial qualities for an orator. Cox argues that it could be more helpful for interpreting Machiavelli's stance on political ethics to think Machiavelli as an orator, not a political theorist when one tackles his deceptively simple and straightforward texts. (Cox, 2010)

However, the most difficult problem people have had with Machiavelli concerns his complex stance on morals in politics, or the question between politics and ethics in *The Prince*. This problem is related to all of McClelland's remaining three points from Machiavelli's supposed wickedness to anti-Machiavels and the murkiness between ethics and politics in Machiavelli's thinking. The root of the problem is Machiavelli's complex stance on morals, or the question between ethics and politics in *The Prince*. On McClelland's opinion, Machiavelli's own *supposed* wickedness may have also fed the image of him as an immoral teacher of tyrants. He did after all write a book that seems to promote tyrannical principality, despite his background and allegiance to republicanism, which according to McClelland is one of the most "-- -- *blatant example of public coat-turning*" in history. (McClelland, 1996, 153 – 154). It seems more likely, though that for hardline anti-Machiavellians the truth of his character is a moot point, with careful editing anyone can be made into a ruffian. McClelland also leaves his argument about anti-Machiavels' influence in the continuing interest towards Machiavelli a torso, although he mentions that they have had probably read only *The Prince* from Machiavelli's works and treat some of its: "-- -- *classical and Renaissance commonplaces about the occasional necessity for princely ruthlessness as evidence for Machiavelli's extreme wickedness as a political thinker.*" (McClelland, 1996 p. 155). This, however, does not explain how it is supposed to contribute towards the continuing interest towards Machiavelli. However, it is true that there has been a strong current of anti-Machiavellian sentiment in Europe since his death, which has somewhat lasted to this day.

Machiavelli's works, especially *The Prince*, have received a very mixed response in European political thought since their posthumous publication in 1532. According to Khan and Cox, *The Prince* did not actually cause a moral backlash during its initial circulation in Florence while Machiavelli was alive but happened only after his death (Cox, 2010, p. 179 and Khan, 2010, p. 241). Ironically, the first editions of *The Prince* and *Discourses* were in fact published in Rome with papal imprimatur, and according to Khan, the early responses suggest that Machiavelli was at first seen as a bit provocative political thinker with a typical humanist love for ancient

Rome. However, this reception changed soon. Khan claims that the first clearly negative public response to *The Prince* came from English Catholic Cardinal Reginald Pole, who wrote in his *Apologia ad Carolum Quintum* in 1539 that *The Prince* came from Satan's hand, or more precisely that: " -- -- *though a man's name was on the title-page, the book was written by finger of Satan even as the Holy Scriptures are said to be written by the finger of God*" (van Dyke, 1904 p. 708). In the *Apologia*, Pole condemned how Machiavelli divorced politics from ethics and saw his mere instrumental use of virtues as immoral cunning. According to White, Pole also wrote a year earlier in an essay that he believed Henry VI's motivation to break with Rome was borne from the ideas contained in *The Prince*, which eventually led for the king's call for dissolution of the monasteries and the birth of Anglican church. The Cardinal believed that the book was introduced to the king by his chancellor Thomas Cromwell, who was very taken with the book. (White, 2004, p. 273). As it happens, according to van Dyke, Cromwell's commendation of Machiavelli was for Pole a proof that the chancellor was Satan's emissary for the king and was in fact possessed by an army of demons (van Dyke, 1904 p. 708). While Pole and some other Counter Reformer critics of Machiavelli did not necessarily read Machiavelli's works, they understood correctly the challenge his methods posed for Christian humanist synthesis of morality, religion and politics. Public condemning of Machiavelli became soon a commonplace occurrence in Counter Reformation polemics, where Machiavelli was associated with other heretics, Luther and Calvin, who also contributed to the new secular discourse of politics. The "evil Machiavel" view gained momentum during the sixteenth century, and twenty years after Pole's tirade Machiavelli appeared on the papal Index of Prohibited Books. However, it was not only Counter Reformers who denounced Machiavelli for some of the reformers, like a Huguenot Innocent Gentillet, did it also by accusing the former from acting in a Machiavellian manner. (Khan, 2010 pp. 241 – 245). According to Skinner, Gentillet's "Anti-Machiavel" (*Contre-Machiavel*) from 1576 popularized a horrified denunciation of Machiavelli's works, and had a lasting effect on the discussion about Machiavelli (Skinner, 1978, p. 136). This however is ironic, for according to D'Andrea, Gentillet's main themes in his *Anti-Machiavel* were in fact derived from Huguenot policies and propaganda instead of Machiavelli's own works (D'Andrea, 1970, p. 405). Additionally, Khan argues that it was not necessary for the sixteenth century people to actually read Machiavelli to "understand" him, or more precisely what he meant for their contemporaries, for Machiavelli: " -- -- *had become an "ideologeme," a cultural discourse regarding the use of force and fraud, including the feign of religion, in the realm of politics.*" (Khan, 2010, p. 245).

According to White, while *The Prince* was published in English only a hundred years after Machiavelli's death, its influence reached the island nation much earlier. The word "Machiavellian" appeared in English dictionary at the latest in 1569, eighty years before *The Prince*'s English translation, where Machiavellian was defined as: "*Practicing duplicity in statecraft or in general conduct*" (White, 2004, p. 265). Another point of evidence is the English drama from the late sixteenth and early 17th century, which was flooded with references to Machiavelli and his ideas. White thinks that Christopher Marlowe was probably the first English dramatist

who referred to Machiavelli. In his “Jew of Malta” in 1590 Marlowe did not only write Machiavelli as a character in the play but introduced some of real Machiavelli’s ideas through his character’s mouth without condemning them right away, which at the end the century already went against the grain. According to White, the most famous dramatist however who was inspired by Machiavelli is Shakespeare, who wrote both direct references to Machiavelli in his plays and based some of his most interesting characters on Machiavelli’s ideal prince, e.g. Fortimbras in Hamlet, Iago in Othello and Richard III in Henry VI. (White, pp. 265 – 267). Although these dramatized characters were more caricatures of Machiavelli’s prince, many scholars agree that they did capture some elements of Machiavelli’s advices in *The Prince*, about which Pole also railed against Machiavelli, that fueled the anti-Machiavellian sentiment in Europe. According to Skinner, nothing matters as much for Machiavelli’s prince as keeping up appearances, and a prince should always aspire to be judged honorable and be universally praised. Even if the prince does not happen to be virtuous, it is all right if he can keep an appearance of being one and take care to avoid the bad reputation caused by vices that are serious enough to destabilize his position. For this reason, a prince must become a great liar and deceiver, and exploit the simplemindedness of ordinary people who are easily duped. Additionally, only very few individuals are close enough to the prince to judge him, and his actions, correctly and not by the outer appearance. Thus, keeping one’s reputation clean is easy for a prince if he keeps calculated distance from the people. (Skinner, 1978, p. 132 and *The Prince* 18). All this of course, went against the grain with the traditional understanding of a noble man of virtues. Khan also echoes Skinner’s stance and agrees that Machiavelli’s prince is foremost an actor who, like a chameleon, can change himself to fit a new role according to changing circumstances. On Khan’s opinion, “Machiavel” as an Elizabethan theater character clearly captured some of Machiavelli’s anthropology, voluntarism and how politics always boil down to the relation of forces. Dramatized Machiavels touched people’s feelings in the changing Europe, they crystallized the contemporary fears or worries over:” -- -- *the destabilizing role of rhetoric and theatricality in the new urban and courtly cultures -- -- threatening realities of de facto political power, the tricks of casuistry, and the new doctrine of reason of state.*” (Khan, 2010, p. 246). Machiavelli himself did not coin the term “reason of state” (*ragione di stato*)⁹, it was used by his contemporary Francesco Guicciardini¹⁰, but Machiavelli discussed in his works themes that resonated with it. Reason of state stands for an idea that any behavior, no matter how immoral, is justified if its goal is to preserve the state, and the term on Khan’s opinion:” -- -- *indicates a desire to cloth a politically expedient action in the guise of rationality, albeit a rationality intrinsic to politics itself.*” (Khan, 2010, p. 247). How Machiavelli differs from later reason of state theorists however, is that he

⁹ Referred often also by the later French version of the term: “raison d’état”.

¹⁰ For more information, see e.g. “Guicciardini” by G.R. Berrige in “Diplomatic Theory from Machiavelli to Kissinger” (2001) G.R. Berrige, M. Keens-Soper and T.G. Otte.

never saw it necessary to assuage individual conscience over questionable deeds and thus does not care about the “dirty hands” problem¹¹. (Khan, 2010, p. 246 – 247).

According to Khan, Machiavelli was in the same time a destructive and creative force for politics in the West; while he forced people to confront the unresolved tensions between antiquity and Christianity, he also founded a new, republican, discourse about politics. In the 17th century with the crisis over sovereignty, the evil Machiavel gained to its side an image of pro-republican Machiavelli, found primarily from the *Discourses*, which was influential especially in 17th century’s Holland and England, as well as in 18th century’s France and America. (Khan, 2010, pp. 250 – 252). According to White, thinkers like Spinoza, Montaigne and Francis Bacon who inspired later Enlightenment philosophers, found from Machiavelli’s works so-called “first principles” in their analysis of human nature and society itself. Machiavelli’s notions about how virtù, fortune and men’s inherent selfishness and lack of moral values tended to cause corruption and degeneration in society inspired them in their own theories. (White, 2004, p. 269). According to Khan, in this new discourse, human relations boiled down to relations of power, a state was understood as a human made bulwark against unpredictable fortune’s blows and laws also were more human constructs and less natural principles, but together with the new discourse there ran Machiavelli’s timeless notion about man’s unchanging nature (Khan, 2010 pp. 250 – 252). However, it should be noted that Machiavelli’s basic stance towards politics or human nature does not differ in *The Prince* or *Discourses*, no matter what pro-republican Machiavelli’s stoutest advocates might say. According to Khan, both *The Prince* and the *Discourses* present the same rhetorical and theatrical understanding of politics which utilizes the uses of force and fraud, instrumental view of religion and celebrates virtù and glory of military conquest (Khan, 2010, p. 246).

Machiavelli’s divisiveness continued with later ages. Some of the western political science’s great names cherry-picked parts of Machiavelli’s ideas which resonated with their own thoughts, e.g. Locke, Hobbes, Hume, Hegel and Marx, while others continued to condemn him (White, 2004 pp. 269 – 272). According to Barthes, the image of evil Machiavel has continued to haunt Machiavelli’s works, and some political scientists e.g. Raymond Aron have confessed that he had written about Machiavelli, in a negative way, before in fact studying his writings carefully. Barthes argues that without context and careful analysis, Machiavelli’s writings can morph into a methodological principle, where *The Prince* is reduced to a description of political techniques which can be used for conquest and preservation of power. This view is based on literal reading of few separate propositions and a gross oversimplification of Machiavelli’s reception, where only historically relevant approach to Machiavelli is Machiavellianism, reason of state, power politics and totalitarianism.

¹¹ Coady C.A.J: “Should political leaders violate the deepest constraints of morality in order to achieve great goods or avoid disasters for their communities” In “The Problem of Dirty Hands”, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2018 Edition) <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dirty-hands/> [accessed 1.9.18]. See also Walzer M.’s original “Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands” (1973) essay.

(Barthas, 2010 p. 261). It is no wonder then, that for some Machiavelli seems less like a political innovator, and more like Pandora who severed the connection between morals and politics and unleashed the dark forces of reason of state and totalitarianism to the world. However, according to Barthas, while Machiavelli was still a “teacher of evil” for e.g. Leo Strauss, others like Hans Baron, Isaiah Berlin, J.G.A Pocock and Quentin Skinner emphasized Machiavelli’s more consensual and less offensive aspects in their works. They managed to reintroduce Machiavelli to current political debate in the twentieth century, but with the cost of neutralizing the scandalous elements of his thoughts. (Barthas, 2010 pp. 259 – 260). In similar vein, according to Black, recent scholarships have tried to both sanitize and banalize Machiavelli. Black claims that some people suggest that Machiavelli faced the same dilemmas we have nowadays and just as we want to salvage good in the world, so did he. However, on Black’s opinion, Machiavelli was not a misunderstood altruist and he certainly did not have a modern humanitarian perspective. For Machiavelli the endgame of politics was not welfare or the good of the people, but glory. Black also questions the suggestions that Machiavelli’s shocking assertions; his amorality, misanthropy, pluralism, rejection of Christianity, cynical advocacy of the political cloak and sociological analysis of liberty and equality can be found from earlier texts or Machiavelli’s contemporaries’ thoughts and thus were not so original in the end. Machiavelli is e.g. sometimes compared to Aristotle, who distinguished two different moral systems in politics, like Machiavelli did later. However, for Aristotle and others who preached the classical political theory, the public good was considered as the end goal of state, which was not the case with Machiavelli. Also, if Machiavelli had just recycled the old theories and arguments, he would not have made such waves in political theory and history would have likely forgotten him. (Black, 2013, pp. xix – xxii).

As we can see, Machiavelli has garnered very different kind of receptions during history. Reactions to Machiavelli were not born in an empty vacuum, and with different times, people have found different answers from Machiavelli’s works. Also, as Khan has noted, Machiavelli became such a feature of western culture and political thought that people easily assume that they know the gist of Machiavelli’s ideas even without reading his works, which according to Barthas has seemed to continue to modern times. Barthas also claims that to this day, despite Machiavelli’s earlier reintroduction to modern political debate, he remains more of a symbolic figure in western politics (Barthas, 2010, p. 271). Perhaps because of this, some would like to topple Machiavelli from his pedestal too, as Black has noted, but accidentally attack more against the figure than Machiavelli himself. Be as it may, for good and ill Machiavelli is here to stay, and people will likely continue to find new answers from his works. Some of these answers are more grounded to history and fairer towards Machiavelli, if we can say so of a man who has died more than 500 years ago, while others have only fleeting contact to Machiavelli’s works, even if they exhibit his name on their covers.

2. The Politics of the Prince and the Discourses

According to McClelland, Machiavelli's aim in his politics was to derive: "-- -- *a set of political axioms from a set of assumptions about human beings which will always work.*" (McClelland, 1997, p. 155). Korab-Karbowick somewhat echoes McClelland and claims that Machiavelli tried to find the "effectual truth", which for him meant: "-- -- *the sum of the practical conditions that he believes are required to make both the individual and the country prosperous and strong.*" (Korab-Karpowick, 2018). Machiavelli himself stated in the Discourses that he seeks to embark on a path yet untrodden (*Discourses* 1.1) and in the Prince, as Korab-Karpowick noted, that it is better or more useful to focus on the effectual truth of the matter, rather than try to figure out what ought to be: "*But as my aim is to write something that may be useful to him for whom it is intended, it seems to me proper to pursue the real truth of the matter, rather than to indulge in mere speculation on the same; for many have imagined republics and principalities such as have never been known to exist in reality.*" (*The Prince* 15 p. 79). Comprehending Machiavelli's "real truth" or political axioms however is not that simple. A modern reader faces a set of problems that concern both issues that were discussed in the earlier chapter, as well as problems concerning language and context in Machiavelli's texts. Most read Machiavelli's works, or more likely only the Prince, as translations and they often lack education or knowledge about Greek and Roman classics (and characters) as well as Machiavelli's contemporaries, to which Machiavelli makes numerous references. According to Benner, the problem is that many of these references are ironical, and without the knowledge of the characters and their histories, the reader might take Machiavelli's words at their face value and ends up missing the message behind a façade, or, misinterpreting the whole thing. (Benner, 2013, pp. xxxii – xxxv) Many ideas and concepts have also changed in 500 years. For example, if we think what war or warfare meant for fourteenth – fifteenth century Europeans, or more precisely for Italians of that period, and compare it to contemporary idea of warfare, after two World Wars, Cold War and War on Terror, we get a very different kind of picture about war and what it entails. In Machiavelli's time, idea about glory that can be found from a battlefield was a sound one, but now the same idea sounds rather hollow, especially if one talks about war of conquest¹².

The Prince and the *Discourses* talk about same issues but from different viewpoints, although not so much moral wise, for Machiavelli's opinion about human nature is similar in both books. In the beginning of *The Prince*, Machiavelli boldly claims that all states and governments that are or have been are either principalities or republics. *The Prince*, on Najemy's opinion, is famous from this type of rigid categories, which define themselves by opposing another and where historical examples are used: "-- -- *with little attention to*

¹² There are and have been of course exceptions, and the idea about war or warfare differs between nations or cultures, but there are still some strong currents in global or western thinking, or at least political and juridical jargon, that show up in these ideas.

context and, largely as parables of the constant tug-of-war between virtù and fortuna.” (Najemy, 2010, p.98 – 99). According to Rebhorn, the key metaphor that defines a prince’s activities in *The Prince* is that: “-- -- he “makes foundations” [fare fondamenti]” (p. 80), not so much against time but against unpredictable Fortune’s blows. Time or change however, plays much bigger, or even central part in the *Discourses*. The *Discourses* often examines same issues as *The Prince* but sees things much more fluidly and emphasizes the mutability or inevitable corruption of systems that originally possessed some goodness in themselves. For example, Machiavelli divides governments in the beginning of the *Discourses* into six types; three good ones which are monarchial, aristocratic and democratic, and three bad ones which are results of the inevitable degeneration of the good ones; tyranny, oligarchy and anarchy. All types of governments are thus defective, the good ones because they are short-lived and prone to ruin in different ways, and the bad ones because of their inherent viciousness. (*Discourses* 1.2 pp. 111 – 114). Machiavelli was concerned about factionalism or powerful cliques that derogate the state by their selfish struggle for personal power or advancement, be it princes, nobles or common people, which is discussed both in *The Prince* and the *Discourses*. One purposed medicine for this destructive circle in the *Discourses* is to share or divide the power between a prince, a nobility and the power of people so all parts will watch and keep each other reciprocally in check (1.2. p. 114 – 115). In *The Prince*, the solution is rather to seize power and get rid of the competition.

Machiavelli uses often the word state (stato) in both *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, but it meant in fifteenth century Florence more a regime, a ruling power over an area or people rather than a state or commonwealth (Black, 2013, p. 100). There are also several words for populations, which according to Benner reflect the different relationships between princes and them. “Peoples” are considered free agents who can pursue their own agendas, even if they are currently under princely rule, while “subjects” refer to a population under a prince and whose freedom is stripped away, and “citizens” are free people of republics. (Benner, 2015, p. 35). Machiavelli also refers to a possible agent or actor with different terms in *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, but I have often changed them all to a “prince” to keep the style consistent. I also use male pronoun through the text for the same reason, although for Machiavelli a “prince” was more of an umbrella term for ruler that included both of sexes and e.g. popes.

According to Lerner, *The Prince* is great because it is intense, polemical, and gives us the grammar of power for a government, while the *Discourses*’ greatness lays in its variety, balance and its philosophy of organic unity in a state and the conditions under which culture can survive. (Lerner, 1950 pp. xxxvii – xxxviii). I have judged some parts of the *Discourses* and *The Prince* not consequential for this study, so I have left them out. Notwithstanding, I use sometimes parts of the *Discourses* where Machiavelli talks only about republics, not monarchies, though the focus will be in autocracy. However, there are some points the reader should keep in mind in the following pages. First, some of Machiavelli’s advices are contradictory, not just between *The Prince* and the *Discourses* but inside both books. Second, some, or many of Machiavelli’s advices are also not

ethical and the focus of his works is not in the moral conundrums. In his noteworthy essay about hard moral choices in politics: "Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands", Waltz however points out that Machiavelli is committed to the existence of moral standards. On Waltz's opinion, Machiavelli's ideas depend on both his commitment to the moral standards and the general stability of them, which Machiavelli: "-- -- *upholds in his consistent use of words like good and bad.*" (Waltz, 1973 p. 175), and an actor's "goodness" or "badness" is only recognized by his allegiance to these standards. Machiavelli himself e.g. mentions that it is rare that a good man is willing to use bad means to become a prince, and Waltz further suggests that for Machiavelli a man can choose either to be a good human or doing worldly good, but not both (Waltz, 1973, pp. 175 – 177). The aim of this chapter is to examine parts of *The Prince* and the *Discourses* to find some useful tools for analysis of the North Korea during its founder's, Kim Il Sung, time.

2.1 Human nature and subject management

Business of governing is at heart risk management with no end in sight for a state is never "ready" or "finished". In the *Discourses* Machiavelli argues that whoever wants to create a state with laws, by which he probably means a lasting state for without laws and organizing states are short lived, must start with assumption that: "-- -- *all men are bad and ever ready to display their vicious nature, whenever they may find occasion for it. If their evil disposition remains concealed for a time, it must be attributed to some unknown reason; and we must assume that it lacked occasion to show itself -- -- men act right only upon compulsion -- --*" (*Discourses* 1.3 pp. 117 – 118). Machiavelli also claims that man's nature is to desire everything, but his abilities to acquire are limited, which leaves him discontent over what he has as well as dissatisfied with himself. This natural greed drives humans into two directions: some do not curb this desire to have more, while others rather fear to lose what they have, which brings wars and enmities as consequence. (*Discourses* 1.37 p. 208). *The Prince's* image of human nature is not any better, Machiavelli e.g. writes in chapter 17 that: "*For it may be said of men in general that they are ungrateful and fickle, dissemblers, avoiders of danger, and greedy of gain. So long as you shower benefits upon them, they are all yours; they offer their blood, their substance, their lives and their children, provided the necessity for it is far off; but when it is near at hand they revolt.*" (*The Prince* 17, p. 85). Both of Machiavelli's works portray humans as cowardly, greedy and self-serving creatures, but without whom there naturally cannot be any kind of political system, so any potential leader must learn to work with this unruly rabble.

When a prince understands how people tick, he can use that knowledge to both temper his own reactions and to drive people into a preferred direction. Because humans are what they are, good citizens or subjects are rather created than found. Laws, education and religion affect humans' nature from an individual to a nationwide level and are some of the softer or kinder tools of "subject creation" that a leader can use. For example, according to Hörnqvist, the republic Machiavelli theorized was not made up from independent individuals or free citizens. Instead, the good civic minded citizens were created from obedient subjects, who

had learnt to: “-- -- *respect the laws, serve their country, and to place the public good over their own private good.*” (Hörnqvist, 2010, p. 120). These soft methods hold a minor role in *The Prince*, which focuses more on use of force and calculated stick and carrot tactics, emphasizing especially the stick, but are discussed extensively in the *Discourses*. After all, according to Machiavelli, equals should be governed gently, subjects on the other hand with severity, or they might become insolent, and trample the prince’s authority because of too much indulgence. (*Discourses* 3.19). In Machiavelli’s opinion, although the prince should reward good behavior, otherwise he should never hesitate to break promises he has made if fulfilling them has turned against his interests, for others will not hesitate to break their promises to him when they sense an opportunity for advance. Overall the prince should be versatile in his thinking and ready to change according the circumstances. However, the prince should also avoid looking inconstant or weak because it can make him despised by his subjects, which makes his position shaky. Even when the prince changes his actions according the circumstances, he: “-- -- *should strive to display all his actions grandeur, courage, gravity and determination.*” (*The Prince* 19 p. 92). (17 – 19).

2.2 Fear, Cruelty and Reputation

Machiavelli has claimed famously in *The Prince* that for the prince it is better to be feared than loved. Ideally the prince would be both feared and loved by his subjects, but because this is nigh impossible it is better to settle for being feared. This is because compared to fear love is an uncertain and inferior base for power, for it depends more on the people who are always ready to break bonds of affection, than the prince. Fear on the other hand is excellent motivator for it: “-- -- *holds by the apprehension of punishment, which never leaves men.*” (17 p. 86). Notwithstanding, love between the prince and subjects is not insignificant, rather the affection between leader, state, subjects or citizens etc. is very important and inspiring source of power, but also far too uncertain one. (17). However, there are degrees in fear, and the prince should never cross some of its boundaries or he might become hated by the population (*The Prince* 17 pp. 86 – 87). Lerner argues in the introduction of *The Prince* and the *Discourses* that in the end even the most authoritarian regimes rely on the mass consent (Lerner, 1950, p. xxxvii), which is the reason why other than showing weakness, becoming hated is dangerous for a prince. Necessity however, can drive princes to act in hateful ways, but it should only be for sound reason, like public good, not for an individual’s self-interest. (*Discourses* 1.9). On Machiavelli’s opinion cruelty can be a necessary tool which can be applied well or badly, and applying it badly, no matter for what reason, introduces problems for a prince. Cruelty is applied well, if such a thing is possible, when: “-- -- *it is committed once from necessity for self-protection, and afterwards not persisted in, but converted as far as possible to the public good.*” (*The Prince* 8 p. 49) ill-applied cruelties on the other hand are few in the beginning but increase with time. As Waltz has pointed out, for Machiavelli only time and its effects will tell if the cruelties have been used well or badly, and there are no rewards for doing bad things badly, even when they are done with the best intentions. According to Waltz: “*The deceitful and cruel*

politician is excused (if he succeeds) only in the sense that the rest of us come to agree that the results were "worth it" or, more likely, that we simply forget his crimes when we praise his success.", (Waltz, 1973, p. 175), which does not change the intrinsic badness of acting cruelly. Indeed, what Machiavelli's prince does risk in political actions is not personal goodness, which is thrown away in any case, but power and glory. (Waltz, 1973, pp. 175 – 176).

That said, on Machiavelli's opinion it is still better to have reputation for cruelty than excess for mercy, especially on the battlefield for people are warier of princes with cruel reputation. In fact, reputation can become such a force that other nearby powers fear to attack the prince and do so only under a force of necessity (*Discourses* 2.1 p. 275). However, ability to threaten is substantial for princes, which requires physical forces and not just bluff. In similar vein, humility is dangerous for the princes because it makes them look weak or cowardly. According to Machiavelli, if the prince needs to act cruelly, e.g. while conquering a state, it is best to execute all the atrocities at a single blow and afterwards try to win the population over. A prince who cannot do so, either because of timidity or bad advice, finds himself from a never-ending quagmire of cruelty, where his subjects grow to hate and fear him because of the fresh wrongs that happen every day, and the prince can never rely on their support. (*The Prince* 8). Accordingly, subjects who live in constant fear because of the prince will resort to any kind of measure to secure themselves and become more audacious and inclined to violent changes. However, some acts that seem cruel on the surface are in fact merciful and better for the society as whole. For example, it is better to execute a few criminals now and then because it curbs criminal behavior in the society, which can harm many if it is left unchecked. Unlike cruelties, benefits on the other hand should be given one at a time, so people will appreciate them more. (*The Prince* 8, 17, *Discourses* 1.45).

Meting out only punishments however, is counterproductive for the prince, and in the *Discourses*, Machiavelli also claims that force alone is never enough to raise in high rank, but cunning and fraud is (2.13). Accordingly, other than fear and might, the prince should also use rewards, cunning and outward appearances to control people, and guard his reputation, because it affects his ability to keep power. The prince should e.g. appreciate and reward talent and those who work for his state's betterment, as well as encourage his subjects¹³ to pursue their vocations quietly, be it farming, commerce or other human industry without fears that their possessions will be taken from them. He should act dignified and majestic in every situation, and let others do unpleasant tasks and take upon himself only those that make him look good. Other ways to enhance one's reputation are festivals, spectacles or a great conquest, or other daring actions, which will also keep the prince's subjects too busy and dazzled to act against him. (*The Prince* 19 – 21).

¹³ The translation of Prince often has "citizens" instead of subjects here, but supposedly a prince could act according this manner towards his subjects too.

2.3 Religion

Although Machiavelli criticized Christian fate at times harshly, see e.g. chapter two of the second book in the *Discourses*, he considered religion as a useful part of a state and important tool for control, which can inspire, unite, and insert some manners or discipline in people. The pressure religion creates can even keep the more wicked members of society in check, at least at times. Both education and religion affect people. Machiavelli e.g. found people of ancient times stronger than the contemporary ones which he believed: “-- -- to be attributable to the difference of education, founded upon difference of their religion and ours.” (*Discourses* 2.2 pp. 284 – 285). Machiavelli holds Romans to a high esteem and writes in the *Discourses* that it is thanks to the religion Numa¹⁴ introduced to Rome that the city grew prosperous, for religion sprouted good laws, and good laws brought fortune, which resulted to happy success in all enterprises. In Machiavelli’s opinion, divine authority however does not need to be real to be effective and law can be good without any divine base. However, a trace of divine authority, be it real or imaginative, gives law more gravity and make people readier to follow it, as Machiavelli argued: “ *In truth, there never was any remarkable lawgiver amongst any people who did not resort to divine authority, as otherwise his laws would not have been accepted by the people; for there are many good laws, the importance of which is known to sagacious lawgiver, but the reason for which are not sufficiently evident to enable him to persuade others to submit to them; and therefore do wise men, for the purpose of removing this difficulty, resort to divine authority.*” (1.11 p. 147). (1.11). Instead of the fear of god, order can also be sustained by the fear people feel towards the prince, but it only works as long the prince lives, and his successor likely will not be as good as the sire. A lasting welfare of a state then does not depend on a prince who governs wisely when he lives, but on having one that will give it such laws that will maintain themselves even after his death. (1.3, 1.11).

2.4 Monarchies and how to acquire them

The principalities, i.e. monarchies, are according to Machiavelli either ruled by an absolute prince, to whom all others are slaves, or by prince and nobles. In an absolute monarchy some of the slaves¹⁵ work as ministers and aid the prince in the governing by his grace and consent. The other subjects do not hold any special affection towards these helpers, and the prince can change them on the whim. The other possibility is that the state is ruled by a prince and nobles who hold their rank by the antiquity of their lineage, not by the prince’s grace, and have estates and subjects of their own. The states with nobles are more factional and thus easier to conquer by sowing discord among different actors, but later harder to hold, for if the ruling nobles are not content with the new prince they will start to revolt again. A state with the absolute prince is

¹⁴ Second king of Rome and responsible of creating Rome’s early religious institutions according to Roman tradition.

¹⁵ Not literally slaves, they are e.g. called “servants” in the 1950’s edition.

harder to conquer for facilitating revolts are hard in this kind of united system, but if managed then easier to hold if the conqueror kills the sovereign line. (*The Prince* 4).

Machiavelli argues in *The Prince* that among all types of principalities, the hereditary ones are easiest to rule, for a prince has both legitimacy and tradition on his side. In a hereditary monarchy, even a mediocre ruler may hold his position if he does not rock the boat too much, which contrasts with a new prince of a new monarchy, or new annexed area. (2). Even in the *Discourses* Machiavelli argues that monarchy is not necessarily a bad way to govern a state, at least not in the beginning for it often takes unusually gifted individual to start a nation. However, Machiavelli especially warns the reader about the dangers a hereditary non-elective sovereignty contains. According to Machiavelli, if the successor does not show merit for his station and just languishes in luxury he can draw general hatred upon himself, which is one of the worst mistakes a prince can make. General hatred leads to fear on prince's part, to which he answers with all kind of precautions and wrongs towards his subjects, which eventually builds up into a tyranny. Tyranny in turn sows disorder, conspiracies and rebellion, which eventually leads to the prince's downfall and a new kind of government. (*Discourses* 1.2. p. 112 – 114, 1.19).

A mixed principality can also be bothersome for a prince, especially if the annexed area's culture is different from his own. By mixed principality Machiavelli means a state that has annexed a new area to an already existing state. Overall, the difficulty of holding a new territory depends very much on its nature, Machiavelli e.g. finds republics so hard to hold for a prince that it is better to outright destroy them than trying to hold them forcefully¹⁶. The prince however, has some options he can try with the new and different territory: he can go live there, set up colonies, protect a minor power nearby to weaken strong factions in the area, or let the people live according to their old laws under a government that is friendly towards the prince. The worst option is to place many armed forces on the new territory because it is both expensive and offends the locals. Change, in this case conquering, is always a risky business, for people who preferred the old system are now prince's enemies and the prince should get rid of them as soon as possible. On the other hand, the people who wished for change will also be disappointed for conquering always hurts the conquered and the prince cannot satisfy all of their expectations. The prince is also under obligation towards his supporters and thus cannot use strong measures against them. In this case it is not enough for a prince to have strong military power on the new area, for he will always need the good will of the locals if he wants to cement his possession of the place. (*The Prince* 2 – 4).

In *The Prince*, the scrutiny of new monarchies starts from chapter 4 from where Machiavelli divides princes in different categories by the way they came into their power. Roughly it could be said that one can become a prince by one's own power, or by the power of others. According to Skinner, the gist of *The Prince* starts

¹⁶ See also the *Discourses* 2.4

from here, which together with chapter 7 introduces an argument that new princedoms are: “-- -- *either acquired and held ‘by one’s own arms and virtus’, or else, ‘through the powers of others and fortuna’*” (Skinner, 2000, p. 27)¹⁷ One’s own arms refers mainly to armed forces who should be composed either from subjects, citizens or one’s own dependents, not mercenaries or auxiliaries, for Machiavelli found them fickle and untrustworthy. Virtù, though not necessarily the princely virtues, on the other hand are more of inherent qualities which some possess. In other words, they are someone’s own power, while good fortune is seen more of an external and independent force that one may possess for a while but not always. Because the last chapter examined virtù and its different facets quite thoroughly, I will not examine it more here. Two other ways to achieve sovereignty are by the favor of future prince’s fellow citizens or through wicked and nefarious means, though Machiavelli leaves the difference between wicked means and “by one’s own arms and virtù” ambiguous in the Prince. (*The Prince* 3 – 8).

2.5 Fortuna and powers of others

According to Machiavelli, a prince who has acquired a state by his own merits and with his own troops is in better position than one who climbed to the throne with the aid of money, or to whom it was bestowed as a favor by a powerful monarch, for they remain: “-- -- *subject to the will and fortune of those who bestowed greatness upon them, which are two most uncertain and variable things.*” (*The Prince* 7 p. 35) Machiavelli argues that usually these men do not have necessary skills or power to maintain their position for they do not know how to command nor have loyal troops for themselves. States that spring up suddenly also lack roots or supports which offer protection from unfavorable weather and are more prone for destruction unless the new prince is quick to consolidate his power and lays some firm foundations for his new state. (pp. 35 – 36). Machiavelli claims in *The Prince’s* chapter 25 that roughly half of our actions are ruled by Fortune and the remaining half are governed by humans themselves. He compares Fortune to a woman who is attracted to boldness (of youth) and a powerful river that can bring calamities but can also be tempered if people take measures against her strikes. Yet, Fortune is a fickle power and one who trusts her continuing favor builds on sand because Fortune changes far more freely than men’s nature does. Changing one’s nature is hard for people and if certain way of acting has often led to success, a prince is reluctant to chance his behavior even when time and circumstances change. Different ways of acting may all lead to success, or different ruins, but in Machiavelli’s opinion: “-- -- *the prince who conforms his conduct to the spirit of the times will be fortunate; and in the same way will he be unfortunate if in his actions he disregards the spirit of times.*” (p. 125). (25 pp. 124 – 126). Thus, men must change the way they act with times if they want to prosper, which is also one reason why monarchies are often less successful than republics. This is because

¹⁷ In *The Prince’s* 2004 edition: “-- -- *are acquired either by the arms of others, or by the conqueror’s own, or by fortune or valour.*” (*The Prince* 1 p. 11).

monarchies have smaller pool of different kind of people who decide the state's course of actions, which makes the state more rigid and vulnerable for changing times. (*Discourses* 3.9).

2.6 Good and bad arms

Machiavelli claims in the beginning of the *Discourses* that people cannot make themselves secure except by being powerful (1.1.) and continues in *The Prince* that without arms there cannot be secure foundations for a state, and without such foundations a prince's power will be inevitably ruined. The main foundations for a state are good laws and good armies, and on Machiavelli's opinion the laws are apt to be good when a state has good armies (12 p. 63). The argument about good arms as states' foundations is on Hörnqvist's opinion one of the main arguments about military affairs in *The Prince*, the other two are the concept of "arme proprie" i.e. states' own armies, and introduction of new military orders as a step by step process, where the development of arme proprie is just a first step in a grand strategy which is meant to bring law and order to the area and possibly imperial greatness in the future. (Hörnqvist, 2010, pp. 117 – 120).

Machiavelli's argument for the importance of arms, is perhaps explained best by what happens when one does not have them. Machiavelli presents this situation in *The Prince* with Girolamo Savonarola's example, whom Machiavelli calls an "unarmed prophet" (6 p.22¹⁸). According to White, Machiavelli thought that Savonarola's two major mistakes were that: "-- -- he had not created militia to protect himself and had not destroyed, nor could he have destroyed, all those opposed to him, most especially pope Alexander VI." (White, 2005, p. 44). Savonarola was a reformer and as stated earlier, on Machiavelli's opinion reformation is a perilous thing for the reformer, not just because the enemies he makes but because his allies too end up being lukewarm at best. A reformer then must either entreat and be dependent on the goodwill of others, which (like love) will fail in the end or become an "armed prophet" who is able to compel others with his own strength. (*The Prince*, 6, pp. 21 – 22¹⁹). Ability to compel, as Benner has pointed out, does not mean that reformer could change people's beliefs by force alone, but that he can change their outward actions with them. As it is stated in *The Prince*, Savonarola's failure was that he: "-- -- failed in his attempt to establish a new order of things so soon as the multitude ceased to believe in him; for he had no means to keep his believers firm in their faith, nor to make unbelievers believe" (6, p. 33). Just having arms however, is not enough for a prince. Understanding of war itself and what it entails is as important and many have risen to the throne thanks to it, and as many have lost their status because their lack of comprehension of war. According to Machiavelli, a prince who does not understand war will be condemned by his soldiers and because of this cannot depend upon them and is left unsecure. Machiavelli then urges the prince to train both his mind and body for war, study history's examples of great men and familiarize himself with his

¹⁸ Savonarola is called thus in the 1950 edition of *The Prince*, but not in the 2004 edition, but the term is used in other literature concerning Machiavelli which is the reason why I have included it here.

¹⁹ 1950 edition.

country to understand its defense as well as keep his troops disciplined and exercised. Machiavelli cautions against idleness that good times may bring, the prince should never idle even during peace but prepare for hard times that will surely come when Fortune abandons him. (*The Prince* 13 – 14).

According to Machiavelli states should always command their own armies. If the state is principality, the prince should command the army in person, because then all the glory and fruits of conquest will be his and not someone else's. Otherwise the prince may fall prey to his own ingratitude and suspicion, which damages his reputation. According to Machiavelli, ingratitude springs either from fear or avarice. Men are by nature both ambitious and suspicious, which is seen especially in princes, who are naturally so suspicious and fearful that it is impossible for them to show gratitude towards those who have made important conquests for them under their banner. Often, instead of rewarding their generals, they get rid of them or smear their well-earned reputation, which causes terrible infamy to the prince. If the prince does not lead the campaign, the commander can do two things to survive: either grovel before the prince or punish him in advance for the likely ingratitude i.e. dethrone him. (*Discourses* 1.29, 1.30). The prince should also never stay neutral if there is a fight between neighboring rulers but pick a side, preferably the weaker one because allying oneself with the stronger party can place the prince under its power. If the prince does not pick a side, the winner will threaten the prince next and the loser will not befriend the prince either, but after taking a side, even if your ally does not win he will be grateful. (*The Prince* 21). However, if the prince has more than one enemy he should try to drive a wedge between his enemies by giving one of them something. (*Discourses* 2. 14). Even in a situation where there is a coalition of princes warring against a single prince, he can be victorious if he manages to weather through the first shock by his courage and strength, and afterwards by biding events with temporizing. (3.9 p. 449).

The army can be composed from different kind of soldiers, like mercenaries, auxiliary troops, state's own soldiers or mixed units, which contains both state's own troops and e.g. mercenaries. Out these options both mercenaries and auxiliary troops are dangerous for a prince. Mercenaries are ambitious, disunited and undisciplined, they feel no inspiring affection towards prince or his state and fight only for a small stipend which is not enough to make them willing to die for the prince. Incompetent mercenary commanders are useless, for obvious reasons, and competent ones are dangerous because they are only interested about their own aggrandizement. Auxiliary troops on the other hand, by which Machiavelli means troops that belong to powerful ally of the prince, might be good soldiers on their own right but nevertheless dangerous. If they lose the prince loses also and if they win, he is in their power like a prisoner. Auxiliary troops are united in their obedience for another prince, which makes them even more dangerous than factional mercenaries who at least pull on different directions even after a victory. According to Machiavelli, a wise prince prefers his own troops and would rather have a defeat with them, than a victory with the troops of others, for it is never a real victory for him. (*The Prince* 12 – 13, *Discourses* 1.43, 2.20)

A necessary love and devotion to hold a government or maintain a kingdom is only found from prince's own subjects, which is the reason why he should compose his armies from them. A prince should not disarm his subjects, because it both forces him to use mercenaries and offends his subjects. The disarmed subjects will think the disarming it is caused either from their cowardice or questionable loyalty, both of which will eventually make them hate the prince. The only exception is the case of mixed principality, where the prince has recently annexed a new area to his old possessions with his army. Those of the new area who favored the prince can be armed, but it would be wise to weaken them and use only the prince's own native subjects of his original state in the armed forces. In other cases, if the prince's subjects used to be unarmed, the prince should arm them because it makes them his own, though he probably cannot arm all of them. Those that the prince arms however, are laid under his obligation and the prince should give them some advantages compared to those left unarmed, who will understand this preference because the armed ones are exposed to greater dangers than unarmed subjects. (*The Prince* 13 – 14, 20, *Discourses* 1.43)

However, in truth Machiavelli's own "arme proprie" for Florence differed from the ancient Roman model Machiavelli praised. According to Hörnqvist, Machiavelli's Florentine army was composed from peasants from the surrounding countryside with very little or no political rights, who were forced to serve as soldiers by legal degree, not from city dwellers or richer rural property holders and a law required the conscripts to: "take an oath on the gospels, with words that "would most effectively bind them body and soul," while a catalog of the punishments to which they were liable was read to them." (Hörnqvist, 2010, p. 116). The soldiers also did not own their arms, they were the republic's property and the commanders had rights to punish conscripts harshly, even burn their houses or execute them from desertion. According to Hörnqvist, the reason why the army was made up from peasants, was because their only source of protection was Florence itself, which is the reason they could be relied upon. (Hörnqvist, 2010, pp. 113 – 117).

2.7 Forming a regime

In Machiavelli's opinion, princes are better at creating nations or forming laws and institutions than people, but people are better at holding them up long term. Governments of princes however can last a long time, if they are regulated by laws. (*Discourses* 1.53 pp. 264 – 265). The reason why one man as a founder or organizer is better than a group, is because the group is bound to have different opinions about things and is slow to agree on anything, and every member wants to hold their personal stances even when it hinders the process. The administration on the other hand, should not remain an individual's responsibility. (1.9 pp. 138 – 139). That said, modifying the order of a state is not an easy task, but it can be attempted either by slow and gradual change, or by one strike. Unfortunately, both ways are nearly impossible. Gradual change requires a wise man who sees the corruption early and who is able to persuade others about necessary change, which is very hard for people who are accustomed to live after a fashion are reluctant to change it

and often do not (want) to see the errors of a current system, while quick change often requires violence, armed forces and rule of one (1.18 pp. 170 – 171).

Despite Machiavelli cautions against changing the order of the state by one go, he offers some advice in the *Discourses* how to attempt it. According to Machiavelli, when a prince has acquired a new state, he should organize the government entirely anew, especially if his station is insecure. He should point new men into government with new titles and powers, make poor rich, destroy old cities and build new ones as well as transfer inhabitants from one place to another. Everything should be changed, so every rank, honor, grade or wealth should be recognized as coming from him and not from the old system. Machiavelli admits that these means are without doubt cruel and destructive, but necessary for a prince if he wants to stay in power. Generally, men however choose a middle course, because often they: “-- -- *know neither how to be entirely good or entirely bad* -- --”. (1.26 p. 184). (1.26). Ideally the founding leader however acts because he wants to promote public good, not his private interests, and does not prefer his own successor compared to the nation’s good. (1.9 pp. 138 – 139). While Machiavelli argues that one man as a founder may be best way to organize a state, no man can govern a state alone, even if he is an absolute ruler. In Machiavelli’s opinion, a prince needs advisors and other helpers, but he should be prudent while selecting them. Like with other subjects, the prince should reward ministers for good work, but keep an eye out to see if they work more for their own advantage than for the state, as the administration should never be placed on such hands. The prince should secure good ministers’ devotion with riches, shared honors and cares so that they are fastened to him tightly enough to either float or sink with him. If the prince does not take care to choose good ministers for his aid, he will be surrounded by flatterers which brings another host of problems. (*The Prince* 22 – 23).

2.8 Securing a state

New governments are shaky, and if the prince does not take care of those who oppose the new order, he establishes a very brief government. According to Machiavelli, it is extremely unwise of the new prince to first deprive someone of his kingdom and then leave him with his life, for he will always carry a grudge against the new prince. Even if the prince tries to conciliate with his old opponents with benefits, their injuries are never healed, especially when the benefits are smaller than their earlier possessions. (*Discourses* 3.4). After the prince has handled the old opposition he should look at the population. Mass hostility of the population is always bad, and further cruelty by the ruler just eats up his position in the state. And although fear makes more secure base for the prince’s station than love, the prince should be careful not to be too forceful or cruel towards his new subjects and abstain from taking their property and women or they will turn against him. (*The Prince* 17).

If the population is hostile towards the new prince, the first thing a prince should change is the population’s opinion about him and the first step in this is to find out what they really want. According to Machiavelli, as

a rule people want two things in this situation: to avenge themselves against those who have enslaved them before and recover their liberty. The prince can satisfy the first wish entirely, but the second one partly. While the prince cannot make the people entirely free, he should examine carefully the reasons why they want to be free. Generally, a small part of the population wants to be free to have power to affect the state, while the majority wishes liberty because it brings greater security to their lives. The prince can satisfy the majority by institutions and laws that confirm the general security of the people, or subjects, and the power of the prince at the same time. A minority on the other hand is easily dealt, either by giving them enough public honors and offices to satisfy them, or just: “-- -- *by having them put out of the way* -- --” (*Discourses* 1.16 p. 163). (1.16). However, while the prince can try to win people over, e.g. by giving them higher standing in the society, he should never try it with the former ruler or his line.

Machiavelli argues in chapter 19 of *The Prince* that the prince should fear two things: attacks from without by powerful neighbors and attempts against him by his own subjects. The first can be countered by good armies and good allies, and if the prince keeps his external affairs quiet, the internal security will not be disturbed unless there is a conspiracy against the prince. The best defense against such conspiracies is to be neither hated nor despised by the masses, especially if the prince takes care not to offend his nobles unnecessarily and tries to keep his other subjects satisfied. This is because the conspirators always believe that people will be happy with the death of the prince, but if they know that it is more likely to offend than inspire the people, they are more careful to attempt conspiracy, which is inherently risky business for the conspirators. Generally, the prince cannot avoid being hated by someone, especially if the prince has attained sovereignty recently, but he should always try not to become hated by the masses. If this is not possible, he should instead try not to become hated by the most powerful faction, be it nobles or soldiers or something else. (19).

Machiavelli argues that a wise prince does not just look at current problems but also at possible future ones, which are easier to nip in a bud than trying to fix a problem that has been allowed to grow into such proportions that everyone can see it. For example: “*The Romans therefore, on seeing troubles far ahead strove to avert them in time, and never permitted their growth merely for the sake of avoiding a war, well knowing that the war would not be prevented, and to defer it would only be an advantage to others* -- --” (*The Prince* 3 p. 19). Princes should then consider who are their future adversaries and whose help they may need in future and treat those parties well before the necessity to secure their aid manifests. Giving benefits to people when danger is at the door is foolish, for the masses will not think they owe their benefits to the prince but to his adversaries. They will also fear that once the danger passes the benefits will be taken from them and because of this will not feel any obligation for the prince. Even when necessity forces prince’s hand in some actions, he should strive to make it look like it is done from his own choice. (*Discourses* 1.32, 1.51).

3. Inception of the North Korea

This chapter concerns the development of North Korea in 1940s and 50s under Kim Il Sung and Soviet Union. It is divided into five sections: the international background on the division of Korea, Kim Il Sung's guerilla history, North Korea during the Soviet occupation, citizen creation of North Korea, and the Korean War and challenges for Kim's leadership. The first section works as a foundation for latter parts of this chapter and aims to briefly explain Korea's colonial history and United States' and Soviet Union's role in the partition of the country during the second World War. The next section examines what we know about Kim Il Sung before he became the leader of the North Korea and how this image differs from the South and North Korean propaganda. The section goes through Kim's background, his relationship with the Red Army, and examines the Manchurian anticolonial struggle against the Japanese, which later became the foundation of Kim's narrative about North Korean Revolution and justification for his continuing regime. The third section examines the Soviet objectives in the Korean peninsula and what they did to achieve them. It goes through the building process of North Korea with its main turning points, introduces different North Korean political camps and tensions between them, and examines Kim Il Sung's role in it all as an agent of the Soviet Union. There is also some contrast to American occupation policies. The fourth section examines the citizen building in North Korea and aims to show, how Kim gained support from the masses and how he shaped the society in his image. The section examines different ways to control people and touches the issue of Kim's cult as a state religion, but because the cult developed to its full glory only after the 1950s I have not examined it in full depth. The Army's special place in North Korean society is also discussed in this section. The last part of this chapter concerns the Korean War and challenges to Kim's leadership. A short summary of the war's procession is included in appendix C for readers who are not familiar with the subject.

3.1 The Road towards the Division of Korea

During the nineteenth century East Asia went through a painful transformation which was largely caused by the growing western presence in the area. The East Asian nations, China, Japan and Korea, reacted bit differently to this pressure, but all tried first to restrict the western influence in their respective areas. Out of these three Korea took the most extreme stance towards the newcomers, which earned it a nickname "a hermit kingdom" among westerners. However, in Korea's case it was not just a tug of war between it and the western powers, but also the regional ones. China, Japan and Russia had their own strategic interests towards the peninsula and competed against each other over the area. In the end, it was Japan who managed first force Korea to open itself after 1875²⁰ and later to annex it in 1910. Korea was not a backward society before the annexation and its fall was rather caused by a combination of things than one overpowering reason.

²⁰ In 1875 Japanese flotilla provoked purposefully Korean batteries at Kangwha Fort which guarded Seoul, to fire the flotilla, which gave it an excuse to seize the fort and threaten Joseon state to accept an unequal Treaty of Kanghwa (signed in 1876). (Rausch, 2016, p. 154)

Some of these reasons, like Korea's geographic location and the policies its neighbors decided to pursue were largely outside of Korea's possible control. Others included economic decline, which according to Lewis turned especially bad after 1830s' food price inflation caused by the decayed food production structures and corruption among the officials (Lewis, 2016 p.21), which in turn created civil unrest. The ruling dynasty turned out to be toothless against both foreign powers as well as Korea's strong aristocratic *yangban* class, among which the lesser, rural aristocrats felt that they were being marginalized, which fueled factionalism in the country. According to Rausch, the balance of power between the throne and yangban which had served Joseon state so well over 500 years now turned against it, when neither side could gain necessary strength to establish centralized institutions which would have been crucial for Korea's transformation into a modern nation-state (Rausch, 2016 p. 156). Lackluster government was too slow to react accordingly to the changing times, and even though Korea started some dearly needed reforms before Japanese occupation, it turned out to be too little and too late.²¹

The first decade of colonial rule was characterized with harsh political repression, and resistance against Japanese rule happened mainly among the exile community of Koreans, which became home for many nationalist groups (Seth, 2010, pp. 45 – 46). According to Rausch, Japan justified the annexation of Korea by arguing that it was best suited to modernize the country because of their shared racial ancestry, which created opposition among Korean nationalists. In return Japanese authorities suppressed Korean nationalism harshly, but the coercive methods also worked as a unifying force among Koreans, which culminated into the massive March First Independence Movement in 1919. (Rausch, 2016 pp. 158 – 160) According to Seth, the protests were again suppressed brutally, but this time the heavy handedness faced more criticism in Japan which had entered to a more liberal Taisho democracy period. Japan ended up giving more breathing space for Korean culture but also sophisticated its crowd control: by allowing Korean activists move more freely, it also made observation of them easier. Nationalist movement was divided in 1920s between moderate Western looking cultural nationalists, who focused more on culture than politics and were readier to cooperate with Japanese, and the more radical ones who preferred Communist movements and Soviet Union and wanted to overthrow both the colonial regime and Korean elite (Seth, 2010, pp. 48 – 55). According to Rausch, the division was caused partly by the disappointment towards the liberal democracies who had failed to assist Korea, and the success of Russian revolution in 1917, which led some Korean nationalists to look at Marxism and socialism as alternative methods for modernization and gaining national independence. However, the liberal Taisho democracy period ended in 1931 which forced open nationalist activities to operate from outside of Korea, where the exile Communist groups never united under a one leader or organization (Seth, 2010, p. 58).

²¹ For more information about Korean geographical context and social structure see appendix A.

The Korean colonial experience changed after 1931 when war time mobilization uprooted many Koreans, and Japanese attempts of forced assimilation turned more serious. Over all the colonial rule became again harsher and more repressive. Tightening control was influenced by Great Depression which made Japanese colonies more important as source of raw materials, investments and trade, and tilted Japan's policy towards more ultranationalist militarist direction. Japan restarted its imperialist expansion in Asia, and Korea became a bridge between Japan and Manchuria, a strategic base for further expansion of the empire. Although colonial regime's assimilation policies insisted that Koreans were now Japanese, it maintained the distinction between Japanese and Koreans, which were seen subordinate and inferior subjects. Unsurprisingly, the assimilation project was unsuccessful, and rather, the presence of privileged Japanese minority with its clumsy efforts at erasing Korean culture created a collective sense of ethnic and national identity among all Koreans. However, Japanese war effort touched everyone who remained in Korea, which had lasting consequences for the peninsula's development. (Seth, 2010, pp. 70 – 71, 74 – 77). Outspoken Korean nationalists were forced to collaborate with Japanese by e.g. proclaiming their loyalty for Japanese emperor and issuing public statements exhorting Koreans to participate in the war effort. (Rausch, 2016, p. 164). This weakened the ability of professional class to serve as effective and credible national leaders but left the exiled members of independence movement, which emerged in 1945, with unsoiled reputations. (Seth, 2010, pp. 74 – 77).

In November and December of 1943 U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Chinese President Chiang Kai-Shek and Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill met in Cairo Conference to discuss the progress of war against Japan and the future of Asia. According to Seth, the Cairo Declaration was the first public statement on allies' plans about Korea, which was not a great interest or concern for U.S. or Great Britain. Roosevelt thought that Korea should be placed under a trusteeship, but the plan was not based on any real knowledge of Korea. (Seth, 2010, p. 84). Chiang on the other hand wanted a friendly and reliably anticommunist independent Korea as a neighbor and sponsored The Korean Provisional Government (KPG)²², which he had proposed to his allies as the government of Korea in 1942. This however was ignored by United States, and Roosevelt and the British foreign secretary Anthony Eden agreed in early 1943, long before the Cairo Conference, that Manchuria and Taiwan would be returned to China, while Korea would be placed under a trusteeship with China, U.S. and one or more countries. (Seth, 2010, p. 83 – 84). Churchill, Roosevelt and Soviet Premier Stalin were also meeting in Tehran during the Cairo Conference, where Stalin agreed that Soviet Union would declare war against Japan in exchange of Kurile islands, the southern half of Sakhalin and access to ice-free

²² An exile government which was organized in April 1919 in Shanghai by Korean patriots in reaction to suppression of March First Movement. Leading members included Syngman Rhee, An Ch'ang-ho and Kim Ku. The KPG however soon grew apart, Syngman, the nominal president stayed in U.S. and attempted to solicit Western moral support, while other member of the government got closer to Soviets and Chinese nationalists of Chiang Kai-shek. Encyclopædia Britannica (2015). [Accessed 21.10.28] <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Korean-Provisional-Government>

ports of Darien and Port Arthur, though the details of the deal were finished only in Yalta Conference (4 – 11 February 1945). According to Lee, Stalin saw that despite the irritating fact that Cairo Declaration was done without his consent, he had nothing to lose by accepting it, for Soviet Union was not at the time in war with Japan but had potentially very much to gain. Stalin also strongly approved Roosevelt's trusteeship idea, for it helped to undermine Britain's colonial empire and spread Soviets' sphere of influence around the world and gain friends in the non-Western world. (Lee, 2006, pp. 30 – 35).

However, President Roosevelt died on 12th April and was succeeded by Harry S. Truman who was more mistrustful towards Soviet Union. According to Barry, some of President Truman's advisors worried that once Soviets entered the war in Asia, not just Manchuria and Korea, but also China and Japan would eventually fall under their rule. Notwithstanding, before the atomic bombs entered to the play American military leaders continued to lobby for direct invasion of Japan by American forces together with Soviet entry as the best method to defeat Japan. When President Truman was briefed about the successful atomic bomb test in New Mexico on 17th July, just before the Potsdam meeting, he started to hope that Soviets would not be needed for defeating Japan, but also knew that U.S. could not prevent Soviet Union from invading Korea. This was because Soviet Union was already massing its forces on the Chinese and Korean borders, and thus the 38th parallel was set as a minimum policy objective by Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall. However, Korea was still low on U.S' priority list and General Marshall told his Soviet counterpart, General Alexei Antonov during the Potsdam conference, that U.S. did not plan on landing in Korea, but also cautioned Soviets that it would be politically inadvisable for either party to invade Korea alone. Truman and his advisors Harry Hopkins and W. Averill Harriman were aware that if they had explicitly discussed Soviet occupation of a portion of Korea with Soviets in Potsdam, Stalin would have insisted on a similar occupation zone in Hokkaido and perhaps in Manchuria, which did not suit American interests. (Barry, 2012).

In 1920s Soviet policy towards Korea was characterized as interest in encouraging and supporting revolutionary and national liberation movements inside and outside of Korea, but in 1930s Soviets main concern towards Korea became how Japan might use it to launch an attack to the Soviet Union. Furthermore, after German's and Japan's anti-Comintern pact in 1936, Soviets regime's survival depended on preventing simultaneous attack by Japan in the East and Germany in the West. Soviet Union felt too weak to face war on two fronts which forced it to play time and diplomatic games. Stalin's approach to Korean question was influenced by these feelings of insecurity and he saw Korean peninsula as a possible springboard for aggression against the Soviet Union by Japan, or another future aggressor, and the policies he pursued to prevent it were both very flexible and opportunistic. (Lee, 2006, pp. 23 – 25). However, eventually the tides of war turned more favorable for Soviet Union and when the German threat was thwarted in the West, Soviet Union broke its neutrality pact with Japan and entered the war with it on 9th August in 1945, the same day when U.S dropped its second atomic bomb on Nagasaki. According to Glantz, the Soviets' invasion to

Manchuria, the “Manchurian Strategic Offense” was logistically very challenging, and the preparation and planning of the campaign took over five months. Marshal A. M. Vasilevsky was originally appointed as the coordinator of overall operations in the Far East and Trans-Baikal regions in July, but when it became apparent that the scope of the operations was too great for mere coordination, Soviets created the Far Eastern Command under Vasilevsky on 30th July 1945. The objective of the Manchurian Strategic Offense was both to secure Manchuria and to destroy a large portion of Japanese Kwantung Army in a swift manner, to preempt Japanese defense plans, avoid protracted war and insure Soviet control over Manchuria before Japan’s surrender to Allied powers. Long and thorough planning and preparation attested its worth, when Soviet Union troops penetrated from 500 km to 950 km into Manchuria and forced the Japanese Kwantung Army to surrender with its auxiliaries in only nine days. (Glantz, 1983).

Situation in East Asia developed fast, and on 15th August Japan surrendered unconditionally. Soviet troops had already crossed the Chinese-Korean border and penetrated deep into the Korean peninsula, while U.S.’ closest forces to the area were still on Okinawa. According to Barry, James Byrnes, U.S.’ Secretary of State, instructed the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) to quickly construct a plan for joint occupation of Korea, which was Washington’s final attempt to prevent Soviet Union’s unilateral occupation of the peninsula. The job was given on 10th August, to Col. Charles H. Bonesteel and Col. Dean Rusk, who had only thirty minutes to finish the job with less than optimal map of Korea. The draft was accepted by the SWNCC and President Truman signed it on 14th August. Two days later it was telegraphed to Stalin who surprisingly accepted it without questions, but he also requested permission to accept Japanese surrender in Hokkaido, which would have placed it under Soviet control. It was generally thought among Americans that it was only Stalin’s willingness which made the joint-occupation possible, for Soviets who were in a superior military position were deemed capable of occupying whole peninsula, though the view has been challenged later by e.g. Sandusky. (Barry, 2012). In the end U.S.’ Korea policy was determined greatly from military perspective, where after the war Korea (and Asian mainland) was rather seen as a possible forward base for the defense of much more important Japan, which became the lynchpin of U.S. strategy in Asia.

According to Barry, assumedly Stalin accepted the joint-occupation of Korea, because he did not want to arouse too much reaction to the Sovietization of Eastern Europe and he thought that by giving in with Korea he would gain more leeway with Japan, which however backfired when Americans rebuffed his demands over Hokkaido (Barry, 2012). Lee however offers more throughout explanation for Stalin’s respect for 38th parallel²³, in addition to the points Barry explained, and argues that the acceptance of the partition was very

²³ According to Seth, the idea of partition of Korea from the 38th parallel however was not new. In 1590s a Japanese military leader Toyotomi Hideyoshi proposed to the Chinese, who had aided Koreans, a division of Korea after his unsuccessful invasion of the peninsula in 1592 where southern parts of Korea would have been given to Japan and northern parts would have made up a buffer kingdom under a Korean monarch. In 1896 Japan again proposed the division of the peninsula (at the 38th parallel), but this time for Russians who rejected it, and in 1903 when Japan’s

rational choice from Soviet Union. According to Lee, Stalin knew that the partition of Korea would be orchestrated together with U.S., Great Britain and China, after all, the agreement about it was reached already in 1943. In this context the division from 38th parallel likely looked generous for Soviet Union when the other three would have to divide only the Southern Korea between themselves. Furthermore, Stalin was mindful of Soviet Union's relative weakness and wanted to avoid provoking an armed confrontation with western powers, especially after U.S. used atomic bombs in Japan. Stalin reportedly told people who worked with Soviet atomic project that what had happened in Hiroshima had shaken the world and destroyed the balance, for at this point Soviet Union had no atomic bombs of its own. Compared to Soviet Union United States had overwhelming air and sea power, as well as nuclear monopoly and a rim of air bases around Soviet Union from where it could bomb pretty much any Soviet cities. And while Soviet Union had superior troop strength, they lacked any true means to strike United States. All this made Soviet Union very vulnerable, and Stalin likely felt that it was too risky to reject the American initiative of Korea's partition. In this new United States dominated world, Korea might have also lost its relevance as a possible buffer state for Soviet Union. (Lee, 2006, pp. 37 – 45). After all, in theory U.S. with its air superiority could drop atomic bomb (or do conventional bombing) anywhere in Soviet Union, so why risk troops in an invasion to Soviet Union's Far East through Korean peninsula.

Japan's defeat and Korea's liberation did not happen through any substantial Korean actions, which left the nation in a problematic position. Koreans thought first that they would gain independence when Japan was defeated, and the news of a trusteeship period and division of Korea came as a huge shock, for neither one was a Korean idea or desired outcome in any possible way. United States' and Soviet Union's Korea policy was largely developed by their militaries from a short-term viewpoints, and George M. McCune, who was the chief of the Korean section in the Office of Far Eastern Affairs in the State Department during the partition wrote two years later that: *"Thus the division, obviously a temporary expedient, was arbitrary line, chosen by staff officers for military purposes without political or other considerations. The State Department, and no doubt the Soviet Office as well, was presented with a fait accompli by the military staffs."* (Lee, 2006, p. 38). According to Rausch, because Japan's defeat and Korea's liberation was not through any substantial Korean actions, no single Korean person or party could claim credit and use that prestige to unite Korean people. Instead, right-wing nationalists gained power in south through United States and U.N patronage, while communist nationalists did the same in north under Soviet Union's sponsorship. (Rausch, 2016, pp. 164 – 165).

position in Korea had gotten stronger Russia tried to make a new deal with it where Korea would have been divided on the 39th parallel. (Seth, 2010, p.85).

3.2 Kim Il Sung: early life and guerilla years

The life of Kim Il Sung, originally named Kim Söng-ju, before his return to North Korea in 1945 is not well known even today. According to Lankov, Kim Il Sung did not attract much attention in his childhood, avoided advertising his background during his guerilla days and was later forced to hide his personal life as a ruler of North Korea (Lankov, 2002, p. 49). Both South and North Korea paint drastically different pictures of him, in North history blatantly serves contemporary policy's needs and South has not been hardly any better. In North Korea, the view that Kim Il Sung erected the nation almost singlehandedly was canonized early, while in South Kim²⁴ and his regime has been denigrated systematically. Because Kim's history has been politicized so much, piecing it together has been a challenging problem for historians. Till this day, one of the best efforts has been done by Dae-Sook Suh whose "Kim Il Sung, the North Korean Leader", which was published in 1988, is still a valid study about the subject, and most of this chapter's contents rests on his work.

According to Suh, Kim was born in 1912 to a peasant family in Pyongyang, but he received most of his education in Manchuria where his family moved during his childhood. He studied in Korean and Chinese schools and was fluent in both languages, which turned out to be extremely beneficial for him in later times. (Suh, 1988, p. 3, 6). Japanese colonial control was shaky in Manchuria and to a lesser degree in Northern parts of Korea, which had been a marginal part of Korea economically, socially, and politically for centuries. It had more independent farmers than South and a history of peasant rebellions, especially after the general decline of rural living standards during the 19th century. Manchuria on the other hand offered new opportunities for poor Korean peasants who started to move to the area in masses after 1860s famines and peasant uprisings. During the twentieth century Manchuria became a frontier region where the vacuum of effective state power, after the weakening of China and continuous struggle over the area between Russia and Japan gave room for: "*-- -- local autonomy, self-government, antistate resistance, and more than little criminal behavior.*" (Armstrong, 2003, p. 18). Thus, for a time, Manchuria became the center of anticolonial resistance and a persistent problem for Japanese authorities, until the guerilla movements on both sides of Manchurian border were crushed at the end of the 1930s. (Armstrong, 2003, pp. 13 – 20).

According to Suh, North Korean propaganda paints Kim's family as a revolutionary one, but while his father Kim Hyöng-jik may have joined an anti-Japanese nationalist group, it was rather an ordinary one. (Suh, 1988, p. 5). That said, according to Lankov, Kim's parents were Christian activists, his mother Kang Ban-sök was a daughter of local Protestant minister, and Christianity was perceived to hold ties with modernity and even modern nationalism in Korea²⁵. North Korea's official propaganda since 1960s has insisted that Kim's father was the principal figure in the entire anti-colonial resistance, which is not true, though the family's attitude

²⁴ From this point on the name "Kim" will refer only to Kim Il Sung unless it is stated otherwise.

²⁵ Though being a Christian in northern Korea was not very unusual for the religion had gained a strong foothold in the area earlier.

towards Japanese colonial regime was probably a negative one. (Lankov, 2002, pp. 50 – 51). According to Suh, Kim Hyŏng-jik spent most of his life in Manchuria operating an herb pharmacy²⁶ until his death in 1926. Kim was only 14 years old when his father died, and his formal education stopped few years later during his eighth grade in 1929 when he was expelled from Yuwen middle school for joining a communist youth organization²⁷. The years between Kim's expulsion from school and his reappearance as a guerilla fighter in 1932 are a grey zone, but it is known that he left his family after he was released from jail. (Suh, 1988, pp. 3 – 7). Afterwards Kim started to follow different guerilla groups, and according to Armstrong he joined Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1931 (Armstrong, 2003, p. 28). According to North Korean propaganda, during this time Kim established four-year elementary schools where he taught students the basics of Marx's *Das Kapital*, dialectical materialism and histories of Soviet Union and Korea. This claim is very doubtful at best for Kim's learning about communism was not through formal education but random association with anti-Japanese Korean nationalists and Chinese Communist guerillas. The person who perhaps influenced Kim's understanding of communism most, and who has been erased from North Korean history, was a Chinese Communist Wei Zhengmin who was Kim's immediate superior and guerilla comrade in 1935 – 1941²⁸. (Suh, 1988, pp. 3 – 10). Overall North Korean propaganda inflates Kim's accomplishments and erases history which does not fit the desired image of North Korea's founder.

In Suh's opinion, Kim's partisan activities are important for several reasons; originally Kim's anti-Japanese actions in Manchuria made him noteworthy, and later North Koreans used them in their revolutionary history, where Kim's and his comrades' Manchurian years have gained epic proportions. Kim's partisan group also constituted the future core political leadership (first the members of the group and later their children), which Kim used to consolidate his power against other rival factions. (Suh, pp. 11 – 12). Also, in Armstrong's opinion, Kim's prominence in the guerilla movement was partly the reason why his group rose to power, and the attitudes formed during this guerilla experience have greatly influenced North Korean policies to this day, for it: “-- -- *fostered determination, secrecy, united front tactics, and an emphasis on mobilizing the marginal elements of the society – including poor peasants, women, and youth – and, as well, a lack of tolerance for dissent, ruthlessness to the enemy, a driving nationalism, and a fierce anti-imperialism.*” (Armstrong, 2003, p. 36). (Armstrong, 2003, pp. 27, 36). Other than these points, Kim's guerilla days also trained him to lead men, act ruthlessly when needed (also towards non-enemies) and work together with Communists from different nationalities. However, despite what North Korean historians claim, according to Suh the major

²⁶ According to Lankov, he also did some teaching and office work on the side and was usually called a 'village teacher' in the biographical references on Kim Il Sung in the Soviet press because it: “-- -- *sounded respectable since teaching is noble vocation and also 'appropriate' occupation for the father of a Communist leader.*” (Lankov, 2002, p. 50)

²⁷ The youth organization itself was small and short-lived, it existed only during May 1929, and it was organized by a member of South Manchurian Communist Youth Association member Hŏ So, not by Kim himself as some North Korean sources claim. (Suh, 1988, p. 7)

²⁸ Wei was killed in Manchuria on 8th of March 1941. (Suh, 1988, p. 8)

organized efforts to resist the Japanese in Manchuria was done by the Chinese Communists, not by the Koreans who joined the Chinese individually. There never was any Communist “Korean People’s Revolutionary Army”²⁹, Kim fought together with his compatriots under Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army (*Dongbei kangri lianjun*, NEAJUA), which was led by Chinese Yang Jingyu. (Suh, 1988, pp. 13 – 15). However, according to Armstrong even after Korean communist movement in Manchuria was subsumed into CCP’s organizational structure, ethnic Koreans made up majority of anti-Japanese fighters in East Manchuria. (Armstrong, 2003, p. 29).

According to Armstrong, Kim started his guerilla career in 1932 with the Chinese National Salvation Army, which was subsumed in 1933 under CCP’s East Manchuria Special Committee. His main guerilla activities however happened under NEAJUA between 1934 – 1940. The fact that he fought under Chinese command and was himself a member of CCP disappeared from North Korean histories after the Korean War and was replaced with alternative facts sprinkled with truths. (Armstrong, 2003, p. 28). According to Suh, Kim started his career in the NEAJUA as a fighter in the Second Army’s³⁰ third detachment of the First Company of the Second Independent Division. He excelled in guerilla activities and eventually became a commander, which was unusual, for it was difficult for Koreans to rise in Chinese army, even if they were fluent with the language and had studied in Chinese schools. (Suh, 1988, p. 21 – 22). Friction between Chinese and Koreans was not uncommon, and it was worsened by the Japanese police front organizations of Korean citizens in Manchuria, who disguised themselves as bandits to gather information about guerillas. An incident with a Korean spy (for the Japanese police) who managed to infiltrate a guerilla camp in January 1935 inflamed the relations between Chinese and Koreans and led to purges as well as voluntary departure of many Korean fighters in the Second Army. A conference to solve the problem was held in February 24 – March 3 in 1935 under the Second Army’s new political commissar, Wei Zhengmin, and some of the Chinese overreactions were recognized and rectified. Meanwhile Kim however was one of the few Koreans the Chinese felt they could trust because of his language skills and background with Chinese education. (Suh, 1988, pp. 32 – 34). Overall the departures, voluntary and assisted, thinned the (high ranking) Koreans in the Second Army which likely gave Kim room to advance, not without merit though, and his friendship with Wei Zhengmin (see e.g. Suh, p. 47) probably also helped him.

In 1935 Kim adopted the nom de guerre Kim Il Sung, and he became a political commissar of the 3rd detachment and two years later he had become a commander of the 6th division, which was often known as the “division of Kim Il Sung”. Although division in this case meant a guerilla unit which hosted at most few

²⁹ According to Armstrong, the fictional Korean People’s Revolutionary Army was based on the real NEAJUA’s Second Army, which was composed mainly from ethnic Koreans and operated from September 1933 to February 1936 in Manchuria. (Armstrong, 2003, p. 28)

³⁰ For more information about the structure of the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army, see Suh, 1988, pp. 15 – 21.

hundred soldiers. Nevertheless, his rise showed that Kim, who was only 24 years old that time had both military talent and leadership skills. (Lankov, 2002, p. 53). Kim's largest and most successful campaign, which made him famous among the Japanese, was the raid of Poch'ŏnbo, a Korean town on the Manchurian border, which was orchestrated together with an organization called the Korean Fatherland Restoration Association (Hanin choguk kwangbokhoe). On 4th of June 1937, after almost half a year planning by the Korean Fatherland Association, Kim's 6th Division of the Second Army of the First Route Army, attacked the town. The Division, which contained almost two hundred guerillas, occupied the town only for a day and retreated to Manchuria on the next morning, but during their stay they destroyed local government offices and set fire on Japanese police box, local elementary school and post office. They also took four thousand yen from the local people³¹. Japanese police pursued Kim's unit to the Yalu river, where Korean guerillas turned around and defeated the police force killing seven officers including Police chief Ōkawa. Few days later 4th Division led by Ch'oe Hyŏn joined Kim's forces and they raided the outpost of Yokoyama timber camp and attacked the Japanese forces together, killing over ten people and taking nine hostages as well as arms and ammunitions. According to Suh, the Poch'ŏnbo raid was significant for the Japanese because it was coordinated by the anti-Japanese underground organization with whose help Kim managed to slip to Korea from Manchuria. The raid also differed from the usual guerilla banditry because they also managed to kill Japanese police officers and soldiers. Kim was not unknown for the Japanese before the raid and there are many newspaper (which were under strict Japanese supervision in 1930s) articles which condemn his plundering and emphasize the suffering of Korean immigrants in Manchuria. (Suh, 1988, pp. 34 - 36). However, according to Armstrong, majority of Manchurian Koreans, who were caught in the struggle between the guerillas and the Japanese overseers saw the guerillas as the lesser evil out of the two. (Armstrong, 2003 p. 24). Also, according to Lankov, the guerillas rarely succeeded to cross the strictly-guarded Korean-Manchurian border in the 1930s, which made the Poch'ŏnbo raid noticeable and news about the raid spread not just all over Korea but gained some international interest also. Furthermore, the raid was a turning point for Kim who was taken seriously as a military leader thereafter, and the Japanese police force included him into their special list of dangerous communist bandits. (Lankov, 2002, pp. 53 – 54).

According to Suh there are numerous accounts of Kim's activities after the Poch'ŏnbo raid. He fought 1938 – 1939 mainly in southern and southeastern Manchuria but managed to slip back to Korea few times. Kim operated with different amounts of guerillas, at most he had about 300 guerillas in his command but often far less out of necessity. Kim's guerillas were always in the underdog position and often divided into small units which were constantly on the move, often through difficult terrain, to avoid casualties. Guerillas used mainly hit-and-run tactics retreating to the mountains after a strike, where it was easier to lose the Japanese expeditionary forces on their tail. Food, but also new men were often required through raids, and Kim was

³¹ Estimation about the worth of material damage they caused is sixteen thousand yen. (Suh, 1988, p. 34)

not above of kidnapping and training young men to become guerillas, though Chinese and Korean volunteers were also used. Weapons were either stolen from the Japanese, acquired from Chinese communists, bought from Soviet Union and sometimes even made by guerillas themselves. Guerilla life was harsh, especially during winters and hunger and cold were rather a rule than an exception and defection was a continuous problem. (Suh, 1988, pp. 37 – 38, 46 – 47). In 1939 – 1940 significant part of Japanese forces were concentrated on Manchuria to suppress the armed resistance and guerillas suffered serious defeats. By late 1940s, all the top leaders of the 1st Army except Kim Il Sung were dead, and Japanese launched a manhunt for him (Lankov, 2002, p. 54). Other than military pacification, Japanese tried to eliminate guerilla resistance by destroying insurgents' popular base via restructuring the local society, but while Japanese managed to eliminate the open resistance, their draconian tactics failed to: “-- -- win the *“hearts and minds”* of the local people.”. (Armstrong, 2003, pp. 23 - 24).

According to Suh Kim entered Soviet Union in 1941 with six other guerillas, soon after the death of Wei Zhenming on March 8, 1941, who had been both a superior and a mentor for Kim (Suh, 1988, p. 47). Lankov, however, claims that the retreat happened in late 1940, when Kim fought his way to the north and crossed the frozen Amur river to the Soviet Union with dozen fighters (Lankov, 2002, p. 54). Eventually he joined a Chinese guerilla group which was led by Zhou Baozhong, the commander of Second Route Army, who had retreated to the Soviet Union in 1940. Soviet Union, which had forcefully relocated the nation's own Korean residents to the central Asia during latter half of 1930s, welcomed the Chinese and Korean guerillas who were trained and camped in three locations: Okeanskaya Field School near Vladivostok, where Kim was trained, Voroshilov Camp in Nikolsk and a training camp near Khabarovsk (Suh, 1988, p. 48). According to Lankov however, Kim received some training at the Khabarovsk infantry officer school until the spring 1942. During the summer of the same year, Soviet military decided to form a special unit from the former Manchurian guerillas called 88th Independent brigade³², which was located near Khabarovsk to village called Viatsk, where Kim was also sent. Zhou Baozhong³³ was pointed as the commander of the brigade which consisted mainly Chinese but had also 200 – 300 Soviet personnel attached as instructors and ideological indoctrinators. Korean guerillas made up their own, much smaller than usual (approximately the strength between 140 and 180), battalion in the brigade. (Lankov, 2002, p. 56 – 57).

³² Lee on the other hand speaks about the 88th Separate Rifle Brigade (88-ia otdel'naia strelkovaia brigada) under Zhou Baozhong's command near Khabarovsk, where Kim and his group spent at least couple of years. According to Lee the 88th Brigade was created in 1941 to conduct intelligence and diversionary activities behind the front lines in Japanese-held territories, and that Kim stood out among other Koreans and impressed Soviet officers with his military readiness and high discipline during training sessions. On Lee's opinion, it is very likely that Kim received special attention from the Soviet leaders, who already had an idea to use Kim as a leader of Korea under Soviet influence during his time in the Soviet Union. (Lee, 2006, p. 130).

³³Written as Zhou Bao-zhong in Lankov's book.

According to Lee, it is very likely that Kim received special attention from the Soviet leaders during his time in the 88th Brigade, and the idea of using Kim as a leader of Korea after Japan's defeat was already starting to take shape in their minds. There is evidence (Kim's biography and Soviet sources) that Kim formed ties with the Soviet Far Eastern command and (possibly) the top Soviet leaders in Moscow during this time. The Far Eastern command headquarters were after all located in Khabarovsk near the area 88th brigade trained, so it is plausible that 88th Brigade's commanders got to meet with the top officers of the command who wanted to use the Korean and Chinese partisans in their upcoming campaign against Japan. (Lee, 2006, p. 130). Lankov and on the other hand is more skeptical about that the idea of using Kim as the future leader of Korea would have germinated this early, even September 1945 on Lankov's opinion is likely too early for this decision³⁴ (Lankov, 2002, p. 18). Additionally, Suh claims that relations with top command of the 25th Army of the Far eastern Front, which became soon responsible of North Korea, were doubtful for the Army's commander General Ivan M. Chistiakov was at the German front until June 1945, not in Manchuria, and Major General Lebedev also claimed that he had not met Kim before the end of the war (Suh, 1988, pp. 59 – 60). In any case, during his stay in Soviet Union Kim married a member of his Manchurian partisans Kim Chŏng-suk, with whom he had two sons in Soviet Union who received Russian names Yura, later Jong Il, and Shura, later P'yŏng-il, who drowned in a swimming accident in 1947.³⁵ (Suh, 1988, pp. 50 – 51).

According to Suh, the reason why Soviet Union accepted and trained these guerillas, who despite being defeated had both experience and will to fight, was probably to use them against the Japanese in a case the Soviet Union had to fight them in Manchuria. (Suh, 1988, p. 49). Lee agrees with Suh that guerillas potential use against Japanese was probably the main rationale for the acceptance of Chinese and Korean partisans during the early 1940s. However, Lee also considers that the Soviet Union started to think more about Korea's future as German's defeat became certain and the declaration of war against Japan neared, and the nation's leaders likely became aware of the untapped potential use of these partisans³⁶. After all, Stalin's purges in the 1930's had culled Soviet Koreans serving in the Red Army, which led into a significant shortage of Korean element in its ranks as the nation prepared to advance into Korea³⁷. (Lee, 2006, p. 132). While the 88th brigade did not partake in the short campaign against Japan and was disbanded soon after the war, whereupon most of its soldiers and officers were sent to Soviet-controlled cities in Manchuria and Korea to work as aids for

³⁴ Armstrong also disagrees with Lee's notion, on his opinion Kim was not: "*-- --the handpicked puppet of Moscow groomed well in advance of the Soviet occupation-- --*" (Armstrong, 2003, p. 55).

³⁵ According to Lankov, Kim seemed to like the life of professional officer and his superiors had nothing to complain about him. According to eyewitnesses, he was content with his life and the Russian names that were given to his children also hint that return to Korea did not look very likely for Kim and his wife. (Lankov, 2002, p. 57).

³⁶ However, according to Lankov, overall the training, organization and the weapons 88th brigade received did not differ from Soviet army's ordinary units. (Lankov, 2002, p. 57).

³⁷ According to Lankov, majority of Soviet Koreans who served in the army, intelligence and foreign policy agencies and had a large role in Soviet Union's (quite passive) Korea policy before the WWII had perished in the Great Purge of 1936 – 8. (Lankov, 2002, p. 4).

the Soviet kommandant: “-- -- a military officer responsible for order in certain district under military control -- --” (Lankov, 2002, p. 58). Their main mission was to maintain reliable communications between the Soviet military authorities and the local population, and because Kim Il Sung had the highest rank³⁸ among Koreans in the 88th brigade, he was appointed a deputy kommandant of the largest Korean city in the Soviet control, Pyongyang. (Lankov, 2002, pp. 57 – 58).

3.3 Partition of Korea: North Korea

The sudden end of the war where Korea was freed by foreign powers placed its future in the hands of the United States and the Soviet Union, to whom it was not the main concern in East Asia. However, despite the emerging rivalry between Soviet Union and United States, on Seth’s opinion creating two different states out of Korea does not appear to have been the initial intention of either of them, and the emergence of two different occupation zones with their own administrations (in early 1946), was an unintended outcome of military occupation. (Seth, 2010, p. 91). Lankov also claims that Soviet policy in Korea was largely a result of improvisation and ad hoc decisions, and it is probable that Moscow would have settled for compromise with United States in Korea, for Soviet military experts were still drafting proposals of a future all-Korean government with Kim Il Sung as a defense minister as late as March 1946. (Lankov, 2002, pp. 7 – 8). Be as it may, both sides were unprepared for handling their parts of Korea, though Soviet Union was readier for the job than United States which was more concerned about the future of Japan. Regardless, the Sovietization of North Korea happened by degrees and resembled the undergoing process in the Eastern European countries which were under Soviet Union’s sway³⁹. According to Lankov a “people’s democratic revolution” did not happen at once but was a gradual slide towards Socialism where establishment of people’s democracy, on the basis of a united front, was followed by “general democratic reforms”⁴⁰ and establishment of democratic freedoms, though Lankov notes that these “freedoms” rather remained on paper or were understood as people’s right to support the new regime, but not to oppose it. During his stage some non-communist parties could also be tolerated, though they were sooner or later subjected to the communists and socialism, in a stalinist sense, was introduced after the democratic revolution had laid the necessary foundations for complete transformation. (Lankov, 2002, pp. 8 – 9). According to Suh this North Korea’s development period, i.e. Sovietization period can be divided into three stages: a “genuine cooperation” phase, which lasted from August 1945 to January 1946, a “bogus coalition” phase from February 1946 to early 1948, and the final stage of establishing a monolithic regime from February to September in 1948, when

³⁸ According to Suh, Kim arrived Korea in a Soviet army uniform wearing the rank of captain or major. (Suh, 1988, p. 50).

³⁹ According to Lankov, Korea however differed from them in three ways: Communist movement in Korea was very weak, their influence in North Korea was accordingly negligible, and no Korean Communist had a significant standing in Kremlin circles before 1945. (Lankov, 2002, p. 10).

⁴⁰ Such as radical land reform, partial nationalization of industry and banking, the declaration of gender equality. (Lankov, 2002, p. 8).

the communist state was proclaimed formally. (Suh, 1988, p. 66). United States' Department of State (DoS) papers from year 1961 also claim that Soviets followed few basic principles, instead of a detailed blueprint, in the development process, which were: "-- -- (1) *the need for a strong indigenous regime; (2) the usefulness of Soviet political system – in particular its concentration of authority and use of coercive controls – as model for the indigenous regime; (3) the reservation of internal political power in the hands of Soviet personnel or in the hands of natives thoroughly loyal to the Soviet Union; and (4) the necessity of a "reform" program and a "democratic" popular façade.*" (DoS, 1961, p. 13).

As noted earlier, Soviets' main interest in Korea was the security of the Soviet Union itself. During the war Korea was seen a possible springboard for Japanese invasion, and while the United States had brought Japan to heel, the geography of the area had not changed. According to Lee, Soviets thought that because Korea was a security concern they should establish a Soviet friendly regime there, which could be achieved through the proposed UN trusteeship in which Soviets should play an active role. Instead of annexing Korea, the Soviet Union deemed it was best to work as a guarantor of Korea's independence, which later morphed into a policy where Soviet Union aimed to look like the only true friend of independent Korea against the hostile capitalist powers. (Lee, 2006, pp. 62 – 63). Koreans' reception towards the Soviet occupiers, despite the acute want for national independence and offences (like raping and pillaging) done by the Red army, was better than what the Americans faced in the South for couple of reasons. Despite the Soviet troops' misbehaving, which was also soon reined in, Koreans witnessed Soviets fighting Japanese occupiers unlike Americans who came much later. Soviets were also readier to work with homegrown Korean political organizations than Americans, whose widespread racist attitude⁴¹ also chafed American-Korean relationships. According to Lee, some of Soviets' policies, which were acted through people Soviets supported, were also widely popular and their readiness to purge remains of the Japanese colonial system evoked significant popular support even among people who were skeptical towards the occupation. (Lee, 2006 p. 136). However, not all North Koreans welcomed the occupiers and changes they brought with them, and according to Armstrong the leftist developments met resistance especially in three groups of people:

1. People who opposed the Soviet occupation because of the violence of the initial occupation forces, food procurement and withdrawal of industrial plant and machinery done by them.
2. Those who opposed the predominance of communists in the North Korean political organizations, especially when Soviets supported communists in them heavy handedly.

⁴¹ See e.g. Cumings, 1981 p. 390, also Cumings in "The Korean War" writes: "-- -- *Westerners had little contact with Koreans except as enemy, soldier, servant, or prostitute. Thompson was appalled by the ubiquitous, casual racism of Americans, from general to soldier, and their breathtaking ignorance of Korea. Americans used the term "gook" to refer all Koreans, North and South, but especially North Koreans, "chink" distinguished the Chinese. Decades after the fact, many were still using the term in oral histories. This racist slur developed first in Philippines, then traveled to the Pacific War, Korea and Vietnam. Ben Anderson called it a depository for the "nameless sludge" of the enemy, and it might be namelessness of Koreans, in American eyes, that stood out then and still does today.*" (Cumings, 2011, p. 80)

3. People who had benefitted from the old order, like landlords, former colonial functionaries and other so-called reactionary and pro-Japanese elements, who were motivated by their loss of social position in their opposition. (Armstrong, 2003, p. 62).

Resistance against occupiers however was somewhat anemic, for those who did not like the direction North Korea's policy was taking, like many landlords, intellectuals and religious conservatives, could simply vote with their legs and move to the South which also benefitted Soviets because it eroded potential resistance movement against them. (Armstrong, 2003, p. 56).

According to Lankov, because the units of 25th Army of the 1st Far Eastern Front had participated mainly in combat on the Korean peninsula, the newly occupied area fell largely under their jurisdiction. The Soviet military handled the "Korean problem" until early 1947 under a loose, though gradually increasing, supervision of the central authorities of Moscow. The commander of 25th Army, Colonel-General I.M. Chistiakov (until 1947 Spring) and later Lieutenant-General G.P. Korotkov, however, had a minor role on shaping the new nation. Instead, North Korea's early development was mainly influenced by Major-General N.G. Lebedev, a political commissar, Major-General Andrei Alekseevich Romanenko, who became the head of Soviet Civil Administration in October 1945, and Colonel-General Terentii Fomich Shtykov, who was also a political commissar of the 1st Far Eastern Front. Lankov claims that it was in fact Shtykov, the principal supervisor of both Soviet military and local authorities, who really ruled North Korea in 1945 – 8, although according to Suh, he did not arrive to North Korea until February 1946 (Suh, 1988, p. 62). Other than Lebedev, Romanenko and Shtykov, Colonel A.M. Ignatiev, Soviet intelligence service and so called 7th department of the Political Administration of the 25th Army, which focused on psychological operations, played their parts in policy development. (Lankov, 2002, pp. 1 – 4). According to Suh, Ignatiev who worked under Romanenko was in fact the chief architect of the Sovietization of North Korea and the one who maneuvered Kim into power and sustained him there (Suh, 1988, pp. 62 – 63). Ignatiev was also the key figure in creating the North Korean party apparatus as well as being the 'Godfather' of the Worker's Party. Nevertheless, on Lankov's opinion, the local military leadership of the Red Army lacked real knowledge of Korea and it would be over-exaggeration to think that they had a clear-cut plan how to do it from the start. (Lankov, 2002, pp. 4 – 5).

Right after Japan's surrender Koreans started to create their own political organizations which were generally called People's Committees (*inmin wiwŏnhoe*, PC). Unlike Americans who dismantled the PCs in South, Soviets worked with PCs in North, even when they were not dominated by communists and tried to promote pro-Soviet mindset in them. Soviets started to establish bureaus of local commanders (*komendaturas*) at the beginning of the occupation to disarm the Japanese, establish order and advice local PCs, which eventually became the basis of a central government in Pyongyang. By the end of August 1945 all provincial PCs had been reorganized under Soviet guidance. (Armstrong, 2003, pp. 48 - 53). The lack of (suitable) communists

however hobbled the Soviet Union, especially in the beginning and according to Suh, the native Korean communists did not have formal ties or official relations with Soviet Union and its occupation forces, nor did they actively seek cooperation with the Soviet authorities after the occupation started. (Suh, 1988, p. 56, 63). In fact, the Korean Communist Party (KCP), which was reestablished in Seoul shortly after the liberation of Korea under Pak Hŏn-yŏng, was also rather weak, plagued with factionalism and unpopular (Lee, 2006, p. 134). KCP also acted independently from Soviet Union and sent well-known Hyŏn Chun-hyŏk to Pyongyang to organize the North Korean Branch Bureau of the KCP shortly after the country's liberation. (Suh, 1988, p. 69). Meanwhile in the future capital of North Korea, locals set up a South P'yŏng'an Provisional People's Political Committee for Preparation of Korean Independence under the command of Cho Man-sik. When Soviets arrived Pyongyang on 24th of August, they worked with Cho's Committee, but appointed number of communists into it. On October 19th Soviets organized a Five Provinces People's Committee with a Five Province Administrative Bureau to administer the country with Cho as the head of organization. (Seth, 2010, pp. 87 – 88). In addition, Soviets set up Civil Administration (*Grazhdanskia Administratsiia*, SCA) to facilitate government administration under Soviet occupation, which worked as a parallel government for North Korea until the establishment of North Korean Provisional People's Committee in February 1946. (Armstrong, 2003, p. 53). According to Lankov, Soviets tried first to win Cho over because he was the most popular political figure in Pyongyang, but his right-wing allegiances, strong dislike towards communists and distrust towards foreign powers made him difficult partner, which led Soviets to look for new political combinations and politicians⁴² (Lankov, 2002, pp. 14, 16). However, necessity forced Soviets to work with Cho and his supporters because North Korean political landscape was originally dominated by nationalists, but according to Lee, this cooperation ended up working brilliantly for the occupiers. The respect Soviets showed towards Cho and nationalists, though calculated and perhaps ingenuine, allowed them to maintain law and order in northern Korea, while at the same time they were covertly undermining nationalists and promoting communists in PCs. Overall Soviets preferred to rule indirectly because of the communist weakness, which as a bonus created a false appearance that they were not in fact carrying out a Sovietization of northern Korea. (Lee, 2006, pp. 135 – 136).

On 12th of October occupation authorities issued a proclamation which permitted Koreans to, among other things, organize anti-Japanese democratic groups (Suh, 1988, p. 70). According to Lankov, the North Korean Bureau of the Communist Party of Korea⁴³ was established the very next day at a secret meeting convened

⁴² The leader of KCP Pak would have been logical choice, but according to Lankov the military leadership had reservations towards him because they did not personally know Pak, who resided in Seoul and thus seemed less reliable than Kim. Pak was also connected to the Comintern which Stalin and his entourage distrusted. On the other hand, a Soviet-Korean candidate was also impossible because they had no repute in North Korea. (Lankov, 2002, p. 17).

⁴³ Which is called in Suh's book the North Korea Branch Bureau of the Korean Communist Party (Suh, 1988, p. 70), and in Armstrong's "Korean Communist Party – North Korea Bureau" (KCP-NKB) (Armstrong, 2002, p. 58).

by the Soviet authorities, though it was made public only on October 20. Officially the Bureau was created to co-ordinate the activities of Communists in the regions under Soviet control (Lankov, 2002, p. 20) and it was established as a branch of the KCP headquartered in Seoul, which according to Suh granted permission for establishing the Branch Bureau only in October 26. (Suh, 1988, p. 71). However, Communists were not the only ones who used the 12th October decree. According to Seth, as the Communists slowly took control of the Five Provinces People's Committee with a Five Province Administrative Bureau and local PCs, Cho and other Christians leaders decided to organize the Korean Democratic Party (*Minjudang*) in November 1945. (Seth, 2010, p. 88). Originally Cho probably intended to turn the Party into a genuine political organization for national Right, but Soviets managed to infiltrate it from the beginning (Lankov, 2002, p. 22). In the end the Korean Democratic Party together with Friend Party, which was organized in February 1946, later gave an illusion of multiparty government in North, while in truth all the power had fallen in the hands of communists. (Seth, 2010, p. 88). However, the Sovietization of North Korea would not have progressed so smoothly without Soviets' "own" Koreans: leftists partisans like Kim and Soviet-Koreans who had survived the earlier purge and started to return Korea after its liberation. According to Lankov, it was thanks to the arrival of these two groups that Soviet administration could start distancing itself from the nationalists by late September 1945 (Lankov, 2002, pp. 16 – 17).

In Suh's opinion, Soviets' choice for future leader of the North Korea, Kim Il Sung, followed a simple logic. To neutralize their security concerns in East Asia Soviets needed a native Korean leader with a right mindset to promote a pro-Soviet or at least neutral Korea. Their contacts and knowledge of suitable Korean leftist political leaders and organizations however were lacking, so backing up Kim who they knew seemed less risky than promoting an unknown agent. Additionally, Korea was less important for Soviets than Eastern Europe and the military leadership had to work with the people and resources they had. Many decisions concerning Korea were also done in a hurry. Soviet occupation objectives (after they had handled the Japanese) were to organize a mass party, institute Communist reforms and create a military to support the newly implanted system in the North Korea. Kim Il Sung had a pivotal role in these changes, not as one who conceived them, but as a link between Korean people and the occupation forces, whose all administrative directives and decisions were executed through him. However, despite Soviet support and guidance as well as his loyal partisans, Kim's promotion to the leader of North Korea was an uphill battle because he lacked a popular base in the country. According to Suh Kim lacked both the popularity to bring different political actors together, as well as a vision for a mass party and his rise was possible mainly because of the Soviet support (where Ignatiev's guiding hand had a large role), the lack of alternative choices for leaders, the opposition's weakness, and his control of military and security forces in North Korea. (Suh, 1988, pp. 56, 63, 72 – 73).

North Korean communists themselves were not a unified force but consisted of four different factions: Kim and his approximately 200 partisans (the guerilla faction), Soviet-Koreans who came with the Red Army but

remained in Korea after the Soviet forces left, the old domestic group and the returning CCP veterans called the Yanan group. (Suh, 1988, pp. 72 – 73). Although Soviet Koreans and Kim's guerillas formed to distinct groups in the North Korean politics, both backed Kim firmly and seemed like a one faction during the nation's early years. According to Lankov both groups lacked recognition in Korea, but while Soviet Koreans had practical skills for building a new socialist nation, most of the guerillas were often poorly educated and lacked political expertise the other groups' prominent members had. However, despite the handicaps it was in fact the guerillas who won the battle for power in the end. Kim's support for his men guaranteed Soviets' support for them and created the preconditions for the eventual rise of his entourage. Shared history was not the only thing which made guerillas loyal to Kim, for their material and career interests also made them close ranks around Kim, who could not have competed later against Yanan group and Soviet Koreans without them. (Lankov, 2002, p. 84 – 86). According to Jongdae the former guerillas took over high positions in the military from early on, even before the Korean People's Army (KPA) was formally established and became a central force in solidifying social forces under the cooperation of the SAC. In Jongdae's opinion the guerilla faction, was able to influence the developments in North Korea because it had both an outstanding ability to be cohesive and because of their leader Kim, whose fame (which Soviets inflated) rubbed off on them. Kim looked like a good leader also in other ways, despite that he was controlled by the Soviet army he displayed a high degree of independence and a strong sense of uniformity compared to the other factions. Additionally, Kim emphasized his military experience against Japanese and made the armed struggle against them his central platform, while placing priority on personally dominating the military, which enabled him to expanse his influence domestically while retaining a certain degree of autonomy from Soviets. The guerilla faction came to dominate the country's military, and according to Suh also security forces (Suh, 1988, p. 103) because its cohesiveness, legitimacy and its emphasis of its own military prowess, and ultimately became the generational cradle of the North Korean power elite and the central symbol in strengthening the justification for Kim and his successors. (Jongdae, 2016, pp. 205 – 207).

The disunity among leftist worked both in Soviets' favor and against them. On one side it forced Soviets to work with the nationalists, for a while, but on the other hand the factionalism made promoting Kim easier because other factions were unwilling or unable to unify behind a single alternative leader. There was especially a noticeable dissonance between Kim's group and more traditional domestic communists who disagreed about who could or should be counted as a communist or with whom they could cooperate. According to Armstrong, Kim had emphasized national united front over the class struggle since his guerilla years and advocated for a coalition which would have included capitalists and noncommunist nationalists at the founding meeting of the Bureau but was rejected in favor for a more: "*-- -- exclusive "proletarian"-based "people's front" --*" (Armstrong, 2003, p. 59). The domestic group however was also preoccupied squabbling with rightists and American military government in the South, which gave Kim more breathing room and

together with inhibited North-South contact helped Soviets to separate the northern Korean communist movement from Seoul based mother organization. (Armstrong, 2003, pp. 58 – 59). Suh also agrees with the notion that Kim's rise to power was also aided by the partition of Korea itself, when many Korean revolutionary leaders flocked to Seoul to fight for political hegemony, not realizing they were competing only for half of the country, which cut down potential rivals for Kim in the North. (Suh, 1988, p. 56). The plan where Kim would become North Korea's future leader, however, had some major hurdles in it, e.g. Cho Man-sik who was well known and respected character in Korean politics and held a powerful position in North Korea, and Kim's own anonymousness. According to Suh, no political group in Korea listed Kim among their leaders, not even the Communists, though some knew him by reputation because of his guerilla activities with the Chinese Communists. Therefore, introducing Kim as a patriot to the Korean people, with many revolutionary deeds under his belt, was the next, arduous, task for the occupation authorities. (Suh, 1988, pp. 60 – 62).

According to Lankov, Kim spoke publicly for the first time on October 14th in a mass rally to honor the Soviet army, though North Korea's official history maintains that the rally was organized to honor Kim Il Sung himself. General Lebedev opened the rally and presented Kim to the people as a national hero and an outstanding guerilla leader, stretching the truth⁴⁴. Other significant speakers consisted Cho Man-sik, who addressed the people as the formal head of the local administration, and newly elected head of the North Korean Bureau of the Communist Party of Korea, Kim Yong-bŏm. (Lankov, 2002, pp. 19 – 20). The titular head of the domestic communists however was O Ki-sŏp after Hyŏn, the original head of the Bureau, was assassinated in September 28th when he was returning from a meeting with Major General Romanenko. (Suh, 1988, pp. 70, 84). In any case, Kim's appearance in the rally was an example how Soviets promoted their choice of North Korea's future leader, although at this point he was supported only by the occupation forces and his own guerillas. The way general Lebedev introduced Kim as a great Korean hero might have also emphasized that Kim had not sullied himself by forced cooperation with the Japanese occupiers, unlike Cho who had worked with the Japanese before the end of the war. However, out of these three politicians only Cho was serious competition for Kim, for according to Lankov, Kim Yong-bŏm was rather timid man who did not strive for top positions and North Korean elite did not take him very seriously. (Lankov, 2002, p. 21). Consequently, he did not remain long as the chairman of the Bureau and his position was taken over by Kim Il Sung. However, Cho and the domestic group were not the only potential rivals, or allies, for Kim, and the Yanan faction's arrival to North Korea in October 1945 changed the situation in Soviets' favor and according to Armstrong, together with the Sinŭiju incident pushed the Bureau towards socially more inclusive, or populist, stance (Armstrong, 2003, p. 65).

⁴⁴ Although according to Armstrong it was Cho Man-sik who introduced Kim to the people at the rally (Armstrong, 2003, pp. 58 – 59).

Sinŭiju incident⁴⁵, which also heralded the end of Right – Left cooperation in the North was a serious blow for the KCP's and Soviet occupation authorities' prestige and dominance in North Korean politics. The incident happened in November 23rd, when student demonstrations and riots together with anti-Communist slogans broke out in the city of Sinŭiju, and a mixed troop of Soviet and Korean officials fired into the crowd killing some demonstrators and wounding many more. Because the seriousness of the situation, SCA sent Kim to do immediate damage control, which according to Armstrong, he did well. Kim acted quickly and listened the people of Sinŭiju, on November 27th he held a citizen assembly where he promised to bring the incident up before the provincial authorities and People's Court, as well as met with the student representatives on the following day. He also blamed the "fake communists" over the incident and claimed that no true communists would have done such a deed, and on Armstrong's opinion: "*-- --apparently saw in Sinŭiju the need for a more socially inclusive but politically disciplined mass party, one that would in particular incorporate the energies of North Korea's potentially troublesome young people.*" (Armstrong, 2003, p. 62). After his return to Pyongyang Kim reprimanded communist leaders for elitism and not listening the masses and again urged for greater cooperation with noncommunist elements. In Armstrong's opinion Sinŭiju made a profound impact on Kim and convinced him of the dangers of alienating important segments of the population, especially youth. As a reaction, the communist social and political organizations became more populist and ideologically less rigid after the incident, starting from the national youth organizations. In similar vein the word "communist" was dropped from many organizations, including the communist party in the following year. (Armstrong, 2003, pp. 62 – 64).

However, Kim and Soviets were not the only ones who understood the importance of moving the masses, and Yanan faction, which was the main conduit of Chinese Communism's influence in North Korea also pushed the Bureau into a more populist direction, though without the spontaneous or even anarchist overtones of Mao's communism. The faction constituted from Korean communist movement veterans who had, instead of retreating to Manchuria and Soviet Union, encamped with Mao's soldiers in China, Yanan, and had close ties with the CCP. Accordingly, they were influenced by Mao's peasant populism and their experience of Chinese revolution. Yanan group had a very inclusive political outlook where a proletarian revolution was inseparable from a national liberation, and class struggle was substituted with anticolonial national struggle. (Armstrong, 2003, pp. 65 – 66). The faction had also organized the Korean Volunteer Army, (Armstrong, 2003, p. 65), which according to Suh was the only viable opposition for Kim militarily in North Korea, but which was disarmed when the faction returned to Korea in October 1945 by Kim, with Soviet

⁴⁵ According to Armstrong, the incident started when several hundred middle schoolers protested the removal of a school principal, done by the communist-dominated PC in the area. For the protestors the principal's removal symbolized the communist interference in education and other public affairs, and by extension the meddling role of the Soviet occupation authorities for the protestors. The violence against demonstrators triggered more anti-Soviet and anti-communist demonstrations in North Korea. (Armstrong, 2003, p. 63).

authorities' help. (Suh, pp. 68 – 69). Yanan group reorganized under Kim Tu-bong, Ch'oe Ch'ang-ik and Mu Chŏng⁴⁶ as Korean New People's Party (*Chosŏn Sinmindang*) in February 1946 and emphasized in their policy the need for a united front in constructing a new Korea. (Armstrong, 2003, p. 66). Lankov also claims that Soviets were in fact on the same page on the creation process of the New People's Party, because in their opinion it functioned as the counterbalance for the Democratic Party. The New People's Party had more moderate program than communists and attracted people who otherwise preferred the Democratic Party, and thus shrank its social base. After all, Soviets considered the Democratic Party a potential threat even after the nationalist purges during the first months of 1946. (Lankov, 2002, p. 29).

On November 15th 1945, the Bureau held a plenum to form a united front of all political and semipolitical groups in the North (Suh, 1988, p. 71). Step by step the nation became a kind substitute for working class as the primary subject of the revolution, a move which Armstrong describes as "proletarian nationalism", which later became one of the most distinctive features of North Korean socialism. This proletarian nationalism which came to dominate North Korean politics was married with anticolonialism and absorbed some elements from Chinese-style mass line philosophy while remaining in typically Korean political fashion disciplined and stable. (Armstrong, 2003, pp. 60 – 61, 65). A populist stance in the Bureau was a step in the right direction from Soviets' viewpoint, but the organization itself was too much under the Seoul based KCP's sway. Consequently, Soviets needed to pry the Bureau away from the KCP, a process where Kim, according to Suh, followed Colonel Ignatiev's instructions loyally. The separation started at the third enlarged plenum on December 17 – 18th, when Kim took over the chairmanship from Kim Yong-bŏm, but it took until the seventh plenum of the Bureau on June 22 – 23 in 1946, that the organization's name was changed into the North Korean Communist Party (NKCP) to reflect its independence from the Party in Seoul. The separation from the KCP was however only a preliminary step for a mass party, which was achieved by fusing NKCP with other parties forcefully. (Suh, 1988, p. 71).

The tense cooperation between Right and Left came to an end with the Moscow Conference in December 1945, where United States, Soviet Union, China and Great Britain agreed that Korea would be placed in a five-year trusteeship under the Joint Commission of United States and Soviet Union before gaining full independence. Originally the US-USSR Joint Commission was supposed to form left-right coalition among Korean leaders as the nucleus for future united Korean government, but in the end, it could not agree on the composition of the coalition, and the occupation policies in Koreas grew in different directions. Soviets pressured Korean left to accept the trusteeship, although according to Lee, Pak and southern communists were originally against it, but were partly swayed over by the wording of the Moscow Conference's decision. Soviets used more diplomatic "guardianship" instead of "trusteeship", in their version of the document and

⁴⁶ General Mu-jŏng, known better by his nom de guerre Mu Chŏng was most notable of these three and had fought along other Koreans in the Chinese 8th and 4th Armies. (Lankov, 2002, pp. 79 – 80).

Kim Tu-bong⁴⁷ declared that “trusteeship” referred to: “-- -- *an arrangement wherein sovereignty belonged to the trustee Powers, whereas “guardianship” referred to a condition in which the sovereignty belonged to the Koreans themselves.*” (Lee, 2006, p. 143) and that the “trusteeship” which southern nationalist objected against was a mistranslation. The left seemingly accepted Kim Tu-bong’s interpretation and thus the trusteeship, though they were not happy with the withholding of the independence. Leftists, however, were also more pragmatic than nationalists and saw the preparatory period as something Koreans had no choice but to accept, while nationalists, including Cho, deemed that anything but an immediate full independence hardly differed from Japanese colonial control. Cho (along Kim Ku) also likely suspected that the Moscow decision was United States’ and Soviet Union’s ploy to prolong their military occupation of Korea, permanently solidify the division of Korea and thus establish in the long run their own neo-colonial satellite regimes on the Korean peninsula. In their eyes Soviet Union was the principal architect of this plan and the Soviets’ guilt became obvious when Korean communists changed their minds and started to support the trusteeship. This in turn made nationalists think that Soviet Union deserved no role in any settlement over Korea’s future because of its minimal contribution to Japan’s defeat. (Lee, 2006, pp. 140, 143 – 145, 151). Cho declined to sign the declaration of support (for the trusteeship) and resigned from the South P’yŏnyang People’s Committee in protest to which Soviets answered by first placing him in a house arrest and later in prison⁴⁸. Cho’s Party lost its political independence and he was replaced with Ch’oe Yong-gŏn, Kim’s close friend and a former communist guerilla, who transformed the party into a puppet organization under the emerging communist authorities’ control. (Lankov, 2002, pp. 23 – 24).

The purging of nationalists spelled also end for the Administrative Committee of Five Provinces, which Soviets replaced with North Korean Provisional People’s Committee (NKPPC) in February 1946 with Kim as its chairman and Kim Tu-bong as its vice-chairman. The NKPPC had eleven bureaus and each of their heads were appointed by Kim, but only two of them did not belong to the domestic group; Ch’oe Yong-gŏn headed the Internal Security Bureau⁴⁹ and Yanan group’s Ch’oe Ch’ang-ik headed the General Bureau. (Suh, 1988, pp. 95 – 96). According to Armstrong the Security Bureau became the Bureau of Internal Affairs in February 1947 under Yanan group’s Pak Iru, and when the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) was established it became the influential Ministry of Internal Affairs. In Armstrong’s opinion, the NKPPC was the first decisive step towards a separate state in North Korea and was the basis for both the North Korean People’s Committee, established a year later, and the DPRK itself, established in September 1948. (Armstrong, 2003, pp. 69, 206). The partition weakened domestic communists, who were forced to fight a two-front war against Americans’ military government in the South while struggling against the Soviet occupation authorities’

⁴⁷ Who aside of being a notable leftist was also a linguist and a scholar.

⁴⁸ Cho and other political prisoners were later handled in “a good Stalinist manner”, i.e. shot and buried in unmarked graves. (Lankov, 2002, p. 24).

⁴⁹ To which Lankov assumedly refers as the “Security Department”. (Lankov, 2002, p. 37). See also Lankov, 2002, p. 27.

machinations, i.e. Kim, in the North. For Kim, the domestic group were his biggest rivals after Soviets had handled the northern nationalists, especially after Soviets started to withdraw their personnel from North Korea in Autumn 1948 and anti-Communist atmosphere in the South made many domestic communists move to North Korea swelling their ranks. According to Lankov, Kovyzenko, later a Soviet diplomat who worked in the Political administration of the 25th Army at the time, wrote already in 1946 that Kim Il Sung's attitude was noticeably cold towards Pak and his southern comrades, and the reasons for the tension according to Kovyzenko: “ -- -- *is not some fundamental differences on important political issues (in this respect the leaderships of both [the South and North Korean Worker's] Parties are unanimous), but personal interests in struggle for the dominant positions. Korean politicians are generally prone to factionalist rivalry and intrigues and [the situation] has been aggravated by a lack of experience and political maturity.*” (Lankov, 2002, pp. 88 – 89). The differences between factions however were suppressed by the Soviets until the late 1940s, to protect the stability of their important political tool: the Korean Workers' Party (Lankov, 2002, p. 87). In fact, it was not until the spring 1948 when Kim truly struck against the domestic faction. According to Suh Kim accused his opposition (but not Pak) of factionalism, individual heroism and not cooperating in the party's work during the Second Party Congress in March 1948 27 – 30. On Suh's opinion Kim used Soviet-Koreans, who confirmed his accusations to attack his opposition while Yanan faction remained neutral in the clash. One of Kim's greatest weapons against the domestic faction, other than the support of the Soviets, was accusations of collaborating with the Japanese occupiers during the colonial period. Everyone who even whiffed of Japan collaborator was eliminated without exceptions, and because the other communist factions; Soviet Koreans, Yanan group and Kim's guerillas had not been in Korea during colonial period, domestic faction suffered most in the purges. (Suh, 1988, pp. 83 – 90).

According to Lankov, Soviets started to give, at least in appearance, more control for local Korean administrative organs during the Spring 1946. The SCA declared that it had achieved its task in Korea and would from thereon to mainly consult the NKPPC which would be in charge, although the actual control of decision-making process remained still firmly in SCA's hands. In fact, in Lankov's opinion up until the beginning of the Korean War all the more complicated and significant political maneuvers, which aimed to create a united all-Korean Communist party with Kim as its head were orchestrated by the Soviet authorities rather than by Kim and his Korean supporters. (Lankov, 2002, pp. 27 – 28, 84). Armstrong however holds a different opinion and claims that from this point on (spring 1946) the ultimate decisions were placed in the hands of Koreans themselves (Armstrong, 2003, p. 69 – 70). Be as it may, the NKPPC instituted six major “democratic changes” in less than six months in 1946: a land reform, a labor law, the nationalization of all heavy industry, institution of agriculture tax-in-kind-system, equality of sexes, and a new election code. (Suh, 1988, p. 68). Many social organizations were also founded in late 1945 – early 1946 as means of mobilizing and controlling group activity (DoS, 1961, p. 50). By 1948 practically every individual in North Korea was a

member of at least one of these social organizations (Armstrong, 2003, p. 106). Meanwhile in South Pak's Communist Party restyled itself as South Korean Communist Party, giving more weight for the North Korean Bureau of the Communist Party, which changed into the Communist Party of North Korea after April 17th 1946, with Kim as its head. (Lankov, 2002, pp. 27 – 29). The separation, however, met also resistance among provincial communists who opposed the creation of independent communist party from the central party in Seoul, though in the end the Northern party absorbed the Southern one few years later (Suh, 1988, pp. 74, 79). On July 22nd 1946 all legal political parties in North Korea were placed under strict control of communists, i.e. Soviet authorities, with the establishment of the United Democratic National Front (*Puk Chosŏn minjujuŭi minjok t'ong'il chŏnsŏn*). The Front made other parties and groups relinquish their freedom of action formally and made meddling into the electoral policies much easier for Soviets, to whom establishing national fronts was standard political measure worldwide. (Lankov, 2002, pp. 29 – 30). Originally the Front included Communist Party, New People's Party, Korean Democratic Party, Young Friends' Party as well as various social organizations for peasants, workers, women and youth (Armstrong, 2003, pp. 112 – 113), but the Communist Party and New People's Party were merged soon together by the Soviet compulsion.

Despite of some difference in their opinions, New People's Party and the Communist Party were merged together during summer 1946, and on 28 – 30th August the united party held its first congress under a name of the Northern Korean Workers' Party (NKWP, *Puk Chosŏn Nodongdang*). According to Suh, the congress elected Central Committee of 43 members, who were introduced by Kim and approved unanimously. (Suh 1988, pp. 78 – 80). Kim Tu-bong was elected as the chairman, whose appointment according to Lankov was likely meant reassure his supporters. Kim became Kim Tu-bong's deputy in the party while also remaining as the head of the chief executive organ in North Korea, the NKCCP. That said, Kim Tu-bong however was more of a symbolic leader while the real power was on Kim's and his close associates', Manchurian guerillas and some Soviet Koreans, hands. (Lankov, 2002, pp. 30 – 32). Suh however notes it is also possible that Kim was in fact defeated in the election instead of making a tactical arrangement with the Yanan faction in this issue, though either way Colonel Ignatiev might have thought that it was wiser to work with a neutral figurehead under communist control within the party. In their speeches to congress Kim and Kim Tu-bong condemned dissident members of their parties who opposed the merge, and Kim blamed opposers for arrogance and elitism for thinking that they were the only true communists in Korea. In the end, the merge, however, was not harmonious and Kim's leadership was forced upon the leaders of other communist groups, but he managed to separate, (and thus weaken) the old communists from their headquarters in Seoul and with Yanan group's help to force them to form a similar coalition in the South in November 1946 which created the Workers' Party of South Korea. However, all this was thanks to Soviet's support, who made it clear that opposing Kim meant also opposing the Soviet occupation authorities. (Suh, 1988, pp. 78, 80 – 83).

During Autumn 1946 NKPPC also conducted elections to the regional, provincial and city PCs, which had been previously only formed by local political activists and approval of Soviet authorities. This made their legal status somewhat dubious, and because all important legislation had been adopted in their names since February 1946 the NKPPC sought to change the PCs' status with "democratic" elections. In theory the elections were meant to facilitate the establishment of a united Korean government according to the decisions of Moscow conference, but truthfully it furthered the legislation of separate North Korean state. Also, the earlier suppression of the Democratic Party, with the full control exercised by the Soviet authorities and NKWP committees, guaranteed the NKWP majority at all levels and made the elections rather a pure formality. Additionally, there was only one candidate who represented the United Front, ergo all legal parties, in each constituency and a voter could only choose between voting yes, no or not voting at all. The elections were accompanied with an intense and skillful propaganda campaign and the participation level was, unsurprisingly, very high. Although, Armstrong points out that e.g. poor peasants supported the elections widely because of their positive response towards the democratic changes and perhaps also because of novelty of partaking this kind of political action (Armstrong, 2003, p. 116). (Lankov, 2002, pp. 34 – 35).

With Soviets' blessing, the first Congress of People's Committees opened in Pyongyang on 17th February 1947. The new PCs symbolized the local legislative power, although the real power belonged to the party apparatus. A new North Korean government was formed in the name of the Congress, Kim as its head, and a proto-parliament called People's Assembly of North Korea was elected, or more accurately chosen according to Soviet instructions. (Lankov, 2002, pp. 36 – 37). In 1946 first units of North Korean army were established under Soviet military's guidance, disguised as police forces for open establishment of the army would have led to a confrontation with the Americans in the South. The security services and police force were born in the same year, though in practice local police units had existed earlier. (Lankov, 2002, pp. 36 – 38). Step by step North Korea moved towards becoming a separate independent country and according to Armstrong most political, economic and social institutions for a new state were fully in place by the Spring 1947. The US - USSR Joint Commission went defunct in the same year and United States handed the "Korea question" to the United Nations which established a United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTOCK) on November 1947 with a mandate to oversee nationwide elections in Korea. Soviets, however, barred the UNTOCK's entry to North Korea. In August 1948 Syngman Rhee became the first president of the new Republic of Korea. North Korean authorities attacked the elections as illegitimate and claimed that underground elections had been held in South Korea together with open elections in the North for seats in the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) headed by Kim Tu-bong, which declared the founding of the DPRK on September 9th of 1948. (Armstrong, 2003, pp. 215 – 216). Southern and Northern Workers' Parties were merged together in June 1949 under Kim's chairmanship, which according to Lankov confirmed the now inferior status of the once-powerful Southern communists (Lankov, 2002, p. 84). Wada however points out

that Pak (leader of the southern communists) became vice-chairman and though Kim had been the top leader in the North in 1948, he and Pak shared authority from early 1949 while returnees from Manchuria, China and Soviet-Union formed a second tier of leadership in North Korea (Wada, 2014, p. 6).

3.4 North Korea: citizen creation

According to Armstrong, many of the 1946 “democratic changes” were directed towards the traditionally underprivileged elements of Korean society, like workers, women and youth, but especially towards the poor peasants who made up a majority in North Korean society. The NKPPC saw that fundamental social reform was necessary for drawing the lower-class elements into political participation and winning their support which would guarantee them a strong power base. Each of these marginalized groups were “liberated” by the new regime and mobilized into social organizations which were instrumental at supporting and implementing state policy. Traditional social hierarchy was overturned, but instead of getting rid of the old system⁵⁰ the state reversed it by putting the old persecuted classes on top and relegating the privileged ones to the bottom. In time the new social hierarchy became hereditary three-tiered structure of “core-class”, “wavering class”, and “hostile class” which was based on one’s own actions or their ancestors’ during the colonial period and the Korean War. (Armstrong, 2003, pp. 71 – 73). According to Lankov, while the new system was lacking in the freedom department, it promised (and to a degree delivered) modernity, economic growth, material equality and social advancement to people of humble origins. The “non-democratic” nature of Kim’s regime was likely its only low selling point for an average North Korean who were by large premodern farmers who had not been exposed to democracy at any level anyway. In any case, even with its faults the new system seemed at least better than two previous ones: feudal absolute monarchy and brutal colonial regime. (Lankov, 2013, pp. 61 – 63).

The most important part of NKPPC’s reforms was the redistribution of land, which was done rapidly during March 1946, just before the start of agricultural season (Lankov, 2002, p. 33). According to Armstrong, peasant demand for land was a basic feature of postliberation Korea for tenancy and landlessness had become acute under Japanese colonialism. In 1945 75% of the cultivable land was farmed by tenants, half of all farm households were completely landless and one third rented part of the land they farmed, where landlords demanded as much as 60% of the total crop as rents. Understandably, by redressing the issue and giving land to the great majority of poor peasants, North Korean regime won their support instantly. In addition, it set an example for South Korean peasants who kept laboring under the landlords who were protected by the United States military government. In North the reform, though radical, progressed peacefully while peasant discontent in South led into tremendous social upheaval and equally brutal countervailing suppression. (Armstrong 2003, pp. 75, 81). According to Department of State papers, however,

⁵⁰ The yangban, commoner and slave/outcast class structure.

although the reform made farmers “independent”, it did not guarantee improved material benefits for them and in the end the regime brought the farmers into the service of the state. (DoS, 1961 p. 6). That said, even when the land reform failed to deliver all the material benefits it promised, its psychological impact was tremendous. Other than the land reform, new labor laws also garnered supporters for Kim, and according to Armstrong, the laws promoted almost all workers’ demands which had been ignored by the Japanese during the colonial period. Accordingly, workers supported the regime to a high degree, under which the industrial workers became a kind of privileged class in society, North Korea after all was supposed to be a “worker-peasant-state” and the state attempted to create an imagined community of class in the workers, which in turn represented the whole of the Korean people. The worker identity was enforced through culture, like songs, slogans, literature and special nation-wide holidays, and because North Korea suffered from a labor shortage, peasants were encouraged to take industrial jobs in urban centers. (Armstrong, 2003, pp. 86 – 87, 91 – 92).

However, while peasant and worker rights were issues where Kim’s and Yanan group could agree, the questions about gender equality set the two groups apart. Severe discrimination against women has a long history in Korea, and according to Armstrong, Yanan group was more conservative than guerillas who, by the Soviet example, were in favor of gender equality. For Kim and NKCCP women were yet another oppressed majority group whose support they wanted, and the gender equality law, backed by the Soviets, was extremely radical by recent Korean standards. Approach to the family, however, was a different matter. Conservative “profamily” orientation was a consistent element of the North Korean system from the beginning, women’s role as mothers was never questioned and a family was backed up as the basic building block of society. The family orientation and maternal imagery featured (and still does) heavily in the North Korean propaganda, which according to Armstrong, seems in fact unique with its use of maternal metaphors for the state, the party, and the leader⁵¹. In the end, however, the liberation of women was subordinated to, and supportive of, the goals of national construction, where women’s political and economic roles were supplementary to men’s work in the society. (Armstrong, 2003, pp. 92 – 98, 226 – 227). Other than women, Kim and the NKCCP did their best to win youth to their side who have also been traditionally low on social hierarchy in Korea. According to Armstrong, the new regime gave young people unforeseen chance to participate in public life and the youths were important agents and objects of social transformation. The Sinŭiju incident also had showed Kim the danger of alienating the younger generations, which is why the Communist Youth League was redesigned as more broad-based Democratic Youth League (DYL) which became an important instrument of the regime policy. The DYL became the largest social organization in

⁵¹ According to Armstrong: “*Kim Il Sung has been associated with maternal care, referred to from the 1960s as ŏbŏi, a term meaning both mother and father, and only gradually identified exclusively as abŏji, or “father”.*” (Armstrong, 2003, p. 226).

North Korea and one of its main functions was to screen “reactionaries”, i.e. those who opposed the new order, and exclude them from the previously educated strata and to ensure educational opportunities for previously underrepresented people of worker and poor peasant backgrounds. DYL developed a top-down system of cadre training, engaged in mass education, developed ideological unity and discipline, was closely associated with the construction of Korean People’s Army (KPA) and after 1949 with military requirement. Over all the DYL was an important vehicle for upward social movement for young people, it was involved in almost every aspect of life throughout North Korea and for many it was the most immediate locus of contact with the new regime. (Armstrong, 2003, p. 99 – 105, 207).

Many of the democratic changes improved the standard of material life significantly in the North and compared favorably with the South, where material goods were distributed more unevenly among the population. This fair distribution of material good and cultural life went a long way toward strengthening the regime’s legitimacy among the peasantry. The regime put tremendous efforts on education, culture and propaganda, and Soviet emphasis on ideology and education found fertile ground in Korea, which has a deep-seated reverence for scholarly learning and where a formal education has been an important marker of social status for centuries. The new opportunities had huge impact on poor and illiterate rural North Koreans who had been previously barred from education. (Armstrong, 2003, pp. 148 – 150, 165 – 169). While promoting popular education, the regime also controlled it and it is often hard to say where education stopped, and propaganda started. Naturally, the education also created more useful workforce for the state, but according to Armstrong it was also used to instill masses with the “correct” thinking and on Armstrong’s opinion: *“Korea’s Confucian heritage with its emphasis on the transformative potential of education, Leninist methods of propaganda and agitation adopted from the USSR, and the Japanese colonial precedent of “policing” thought made it all but inevitable that highly politicized mass education would play central role in the North Korean revolution.”* (Armstrong, 2003, p. 174).

In the propaganda the land reform was centerpiece of the new democratic regime and associated closely with Kim Il Sung, who personalized the regime for peasants. Kim’s “cult of personality⁵²” started to emerge already in 1946 in the countryside where peasants held rallies to express their personal gratitude to Kim following the land reform and where he morphed into almost a godlike figure who, apart from politics, was also personally responsible for the forces of nature⁵³. (Armstrong, 2003, p. 150). Kim’s cult of personality,

⁵² Gardner for example has described cult of personality a complex and persistent phenomenon which has existed in different times and societies to create, maintain and justify a situation where an individual can be both a possessor of authority and thereby an appropriate object of deference. According to Gardner it seems like human mind prefers a personification of authority as a focus for respect instead of authority in the abstract. People rather honor the ruler than the rule of law. In Gardner’s opinion the connection with the religious impulse is obvious and has produced at times an assertion of divinity, or at least divine sponsorship, of the ruler. (Gardner, 1974, p. xv).

⁵³ According to Armstrong: *“The beneficent image of General Kim was linked to the bumper harvest of 1946 and the successful containment of the floods that winter.”* (Armstrong, 2003, p. 150).

which Lim calls, more accurately, “cult of leadership” (Lim, 2015) grew from this movement, though according to Lim it might have been initiated even earlier in 1945 when Soviets introduced Kim to the Korean people as a distinguished anti-Japanese leader. In Lim’s opinion, the North Korean cult of leadership is a consequence of a long-time dictatorial rule of Kim family and the cult’s ultimate goals include the maintenance of the leaders’ perceived political legitimacy and the justification of the system of hereditary succession. Lim designates North Korea a “leader state”: “-- -- whose legitimacy is based solely on the leaders’ personal legitimacy and is maintained mainly by the indoctrination of people with leader symbols and the enactment of leadership cults in daily life.” (Lim, 2015, p. 4). The leader state originates from Kim’s anti-Japanese struggle which forms the core of the revolutionary tradition in state propaganda which induces North Koreans to share this struggle as a collective memory that defines the state’s past, present, and future. The mythologization of Kim started already in 1946 when Kim’s hagiography was published in North Korea and continued during the Korean War when e.g. the Poch’ŏnbo⁵⁴ Revolutionary Museum was built in April 1952. The cult developed aggressively in mid 1950s but came fully fledged (or evolved from a personality cult into a leadership cult) only in 1980s when the state declared that the first hereditary succession from Kim Il Sung to Kim Il Jong had been prepared at the Sixth Congress of the KWP in October 1980. However, because the major developments of the cult, like habitual referring to Kim Il Sung as *suryŏng*⁵⁵, addition of Kim Il Sung’s family members as objects of reverence and emphasis of Kim bloodline, which has helped to legitimize the succession and is supported by old Confucian traditions in Korea, happened after the time scope of this work I will not examine the cult itself any closer. (Lim, 2015, pp. 2 – 15, 20 – 65). Suffice it to say, the cult has mixed both foreign and indigenous Korean beliefs into a persisting combination which has clear religious undertones and has had a huge impact on North Korean people⁵⁶, Kim’s regime and the state, and their survival, though the state’s isolated social setting has helped it to flourish. According to Armstrong after the establishment of the DPRK in 1948 there was a clear change in the state’s focus from eliminating the “bad elements” in the society to concern towards external threats to the nation together with increasing criticism towards South Korea’s national betrayal and talk of “Defending the Fatherland” (*choguk powi*). North Korea’s aim shifted towards creating a “thought unity” (*sasang t’ongil*) within the party and the local PCs together with physical and spiritual training of individuals: “-- -- all linked in turn to the defense of and integration into

⁵⁴ According to Lim the Poch’ŏnbo raid is important for North Koreans because it is a symbolic evidence of Kim’s attempt to liberate Korea. (Lim, 2015, p. 64).

⁵⁵ Although according to Lankov the North Korean press began to call Kim with this term already in late 1940s. (Lankov, 2002, p. 86).

⁵⁶ According to Lim who has interviewed North Korean defectors, even those who are critical towards the North Korean state (and Kim Jon Il) still hold emotional attachments towards the great leader, Kim Il Sung, years after their defection and on his opinion will likely never get completely over the cult education they received in the North. (Lim, 2015, pp. 122 – 123).

the state that represents the “national subject”, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.” (Armstrong, 2003, p. 211). (ibid, pp. 210 – 211).

North Korea however was not alone with its militant rhetoric and actions, and according to Seth even Americans were wary of South Korea’s President Rhee’s strident nationalism and were concerned over reports of raids done by South Korean forces along the northern border. North Korea however had much larger and better equipped army with much more experienced troops than the South. (Seth, 2010, p. 100). Overall, the army had and still holds a special place in North Korean society, perhaps understandably for Kim Il Sung himself had military background and the Red Army officers were also chief architects of the state during its early years. According to Armstrong Kim declared at the KPA’s founding ceremony that a state without its own military cannot be fully independent and KPA would be a foundation of the DPRK which true freedom and peace would be only guaranteed by strength and military superiority. (Armstrong, 2003, p. 232). According to DoS papers, the army’s greater size was thanks to the enforced economic privation, which enabled the development and support of a greater army. Additionally, the army also had first call on the resources of the state and was bestowed operatively with unusual degree of autonomy from outside of bureaucratic channels. Other than its size and equipment two factors strengthened the army, for: “-- -- *administratively, it was able to avoid the pitfall of internal corruption; psychologically, extensive efforts were made to infuse the army with a sense of its special mission and superior status. The regime attempted to convince the conscript that he was a volunteer and a “hero of the working class”; the military as a whole received excellent rations and extensive indoctrination; and the treatment of officers in particular made them one of the major elite groups on the society.*” (Dos, 1961, p. 8). According to Armstrong the North Korean society became highly militarized even before the KPA was inaugurated in February 1948, but the party, state and military apparatuses underwent a rapid process of consolidation and strengthening before the outbreak of Korean War in June 1950. On Armstrong’s opinion the party-state-military triumvirate was fully in place already in 1948 and would dominate the North Korean system for decades to come. (Armstrong, 2003, p. 217 – 218).

3.5 Korean War and challenges for Kim’s leadership

Despite the waves the Korean War created around the world, it was very much a Korean choice in the beginning. Both Syngman Rhee’s regime in the South and Kim Il Song’s in the North chafed under the artificial separation of the country, the border of the two Koreas was a scene for national posturing and aggression long before beginning of the war, and both regimes wanted to reunify the country forcefully. According to Suh, Kim considered the military reunification to be the most efficient solution to the problem. In Kim’s opinion the united and democratic Korea to which all Koreans aspired to could be had only by ultimate victory over the reactionary traitors in the South. (Suh, 1988, p. 112 – 113). The sponsors of the regimes’, United States for Rhee’s and Soviet Union for Kim’s however were much warier about a direct confrontation in the

peninsula and advised their “proteges” temper themselves. According to Seth, United States did not want to invest too much in Korea or risk a conflict on the peninsula which remained a peripheral concern for it. Soviet Union also sought to limit its commitment to the Korea and was originally reluctant to see a war start there, but also provided far more extensive buildup for the North Korean armed forces than United States did in the South. (Seth, 2010, pp. 99 – 100). In Wada’s opinion their presence acted partly as a barrier against conflict between the South and the North Korea (Wada, 2014, p. 4) and the eventual withdrawal of the occupation forces changed the power balance both between the Koreas and inside of them. In the North Kim had benefitted greatly from the Soviet presence and the withdrawal of their forces in Autumn 1948, together with swelling numbers of southern Communists who had fled American oppression in the South made his position more precarious when the domestic faction gained strength in the North. Comparably Soviet Union’s hold over North Korea and Soviet Koreans’ position in the country diminished, especially after the war turned sour for North Korea and Soviet Union did not aid it much militarily, while relations with China grew stronger because of the war. According to Chae many North Korean troops had been assisting Mao’s People’s Liberation Army since 1947 against Chiang’s Kuomintang troops, securing a debt of gratitude for Kim from Mao and battle-hardened troops for North Korea, but which also tied many of them to Manchuria (Chae, 2016, p. 186), when Soviet Union had already pulled back from the Korean Peninsula. On the other side of the peninsula the withdrawal of American occupation forces, though it started later than the Soviet Union’s, and dwindling economic assistance to South Korea weakened the country’s military, but also gave freer rein for belligerent Rhee. According to Wada Shtykov, who remained in North Korea, was alarmed by this and wrote in 1949 Summer to Stalin that: *“Withdrawal should give freedom of action to the Southern reactionaries who want to resolve unification by force. This is advocated by Syngman Rhee, Yi Pom-sok, Shin Sung-mo, and the leaders of the National Democratic Party. They agree on everything except when to attack -- --”* (Wada, 2014, p. 26.). The Americans however were more phlegmatic and despite that United States’ Ambassador Muccio found out that Rhee had negotiated with Chiang behind his back about Taiwanese air support for invasion to North Korea, he seriously doubted (correctly) that Rhee would order a move to North. (Wada, 2014, pp. 30 – 31).

According to Wada North Korean leadership however was itching for a fight, especially after the 6th and the 5th Divisions⁵⁷ of the KPA returned from Manchuria and with the US troops gone made DPRK militarily superior to the ROKA. North Korea’s leadership likely thought that there was a limited window of opportunity, and according to Wada Shtykov marked in his report to Stalin, written in August 1949, that both Kim and Pak thought that unification of Korea could not be achieved through peaceful measures and that a large majority of Koreans wanted to end the division of the country. In their opinion, if North did not strike the peninsula would remain divided for a long time, and the southern reactionaries would crush left wing elements in the

⁵⁷ Originally the 166th and 164th.

South, build a powerful military force, and possibly invade the North. Stalin however was more cautious about the possible invasion and United States' hypothetical reaction to it, even when Soviet Union tested successfully its first nuclear device, RDS-1 on 29th of August 1949⁵⁸. After Kim kept rising the issue with him, Stalin asked, in Sthikov's absence, the senior embassy officer G.I. Tunkin to assess the North Korean thinking in five points:

1. Evaluation of ROKA numbers, arms, and combat capability.
2. The partisan movement in the South and the degree of expected public support.
3. The popular reaction in the South and the extent of real support for the KPA military units if the North attacked first.
4. The presence of US forces in the South and Kim Il Sung's opinion on what measures the United States' might take if North Korea attacked.
5. Evaluation of North Korea's strength, military readiness, equipment, and combat capability. (Wada, 2014, pp. 32 – 34, 37).

Kim thought that KPA was superior to ROKA in almost every way and the war against South would be a short affair. Additionally, both him and Pak hoped that the conflict could be carried out at least partly by the communist guerillas in the South, and according to Wada Pak believed that partisan support would be huge. Suh claims that Pak promised to Kim that once the KPA started military action to liberate the South, some 200 000 loyal followers of his organizations would rise up to overthrow the South Korean regime (Suh, 1988, p. 121) and both Kim and Pak expected that the partisans in the South would cut communications and hoped they would seize the major ports, though Kim remained more cautious about partisans' capabilities than Pak. (Wada, 2014, pp. 34 – 35). According to Suh, Pak believed that he and the domestic group could improve their position over other factions once Seoul became the capital of whole Korea because most of his organizational units and operational bases were in the South (Suh, 1988, p. 121). Despite North Korean leadership's reassurances Tunkin remained somewhat sceptic of KPA's capabilities and recognized that there was a possibility the invasion could become a civil war and cautioned North Koreans to wait until additional equipment would arrive from the Soviet Union. (Wada, 2014, pp. 36 – 37). Mao's triumph in the Chinese Revolution and United States' Secretary of State Dean Acheson's speech on January 12th in 1950, which placed the Aleutian Islands, Japan, and the Philippines, but not South Korea or Taiwan within the US defense perimeter, however changed the situation in the communist camp. According to Wada, Stalin informed Kim in January 1950 that he was open for the forceful unification of Korea if necessary preparations were made and the affair would be organized in a way that avoided excessive risk, and the plan gained approval of Chinese leaders. Kim and Pak gained Mao's approval who promised all-out support for Kim if Washington decided to enter the fight. Previously Mao and Kim had been concerned about possible deployment of Japanese forces but after American occupiers had disarmed the country Kim thought that it was unlikely that

⁵⁸ <https://www.atomicheritage.org/history/soviet-atomic-program-1946> [accessed 31.3.19]

any foreign enemy troops would partake in the war for United States had also withdrawn from China without fighting, while Mao remained warier about United States' possible actions. (Wada, 2014, pp. 54 – 59).

Despite the war started very well for North Koreans both estimations about United States' inaction and partisan capabilities turned out to be dangerously false. The partisans in the South failed to achieve much and when United States with the UN and ROK forces crossed the 38th parallel in North Korea and captured Pyongyang, the Chinese volunteers, who according to Lankov did not hold Kim in very high regard at the time (Lankov, 2002, p. 92), pushed Kim aside and took over management of the war. According to Wada in North Korean politics Kim however bore responsibility for the setbacks as the supreme commander, but he sought to remediate the situation by blaming everything on the frontline commanders and his vice-minister of defense, not to forget the southern partisans (Wada, 2014, pp. 155 – 156). According to Suh Kim e.g. lamented Pak's credibility long after the conclusion of the war, called him a liar and said that there had not been even 1 000, let alone 200 000 members in Pak's organizations in the South. Even Kim's own partisans and loyal Soviet-Koreans did not escape unscathed but were relieved from their positions and expelled from the party, but when the Chinese recovered most of the lost territory Kim's partisans were reinstated. Mu Chŏng from the Yanan faction on the other hand was expelled permanently⁵⁹. (Suh, 1988, pp. 121 – 123). According to Lankov, at the end of the war Kim also got rid of another Yanan faction's powerhouse, Pak Il-u, who was Minister of the Interior at the time, and according to Suh proclaimed himself to be the leader of the Yanan faction (Suh, 1988, p. 124). According to Suh, thinning the ranks of the powerful members of the Yanan faction, despite that they had ties to the Chinese communists who had saved North Korea, was possible for Kim because the Chinese took a neutral stance in North Korean politics. In Suh's opinion they were seemingly more interested in stabilizing and concluding the hostilities in Korea than meddling with the internal politics. Additionally, the Yanan faction never asked for assistance from the Chinese, nor did the Chinese offer it to them. Kim himself was also familiar with the Chinese although the volunteers were not his old comrades, but he could at least converse with them freely because his grasp of the language and felt at ease with them. (Suh, 1988, pp. 126, 155 – 156).

Soviets' and Soviet-Koreans' prestige dimmed during the war because the Soviet Union did not come on North Korea's defense like China. According to Lankov the constant Soviet managing also had started to annoy Kim (perhaps even before the war) and the war allowed him to initiate a gradual liberation from their control. The first sign of this was a dispute between Kim and the of the leader of Soviet-Koreans, A.I. Hegai⁶⁰, though the move against Soviet-Koreans really gained momentum after the war, in the middle of the 1950s.

⁵⁹ Although in Suh's opinion this was not because he was Kim's rival per se, but because he had executed retreating soldiers as though he were a "feudal warlord" and leaving Pyongyang for the UN forces without fighting and fleeing to China when he had been charged with its defense. (ibid).

⁶⁰ Or Hŏ Ka-i.

(Lankov, 2002, pp. 91 – 92, 134). Suh however disagrees with the reason behind Hegai's and Kim's dispute. In Suh's opinion, it was rather caused by their differences about how the party should be reorganized (Kim's mass party or Hegai's elite communist party with far less peasants) and what should be done with the party members with questionable loyalty, than Kim's desire to free himself from the Soviet influence. (Suh, 1988, p. 123 – 126). Either way, there does not seem to have been any negative effect for Hegai's purging for Kim from the Soviet Union, and according to Suh, Kim exploited his Chinese ties during the Chinese occupation of North Korea after the war to strengthen his anti-Soviet stance (Suh, 1988, p. 157). However, according to Lankov, Kim could not truly strike against the Soviet-Koreans nor the Yanan faction during the war or right after it because both still enjoyed some protection from the Soviet Union and China. The domestic faction however did not have this kind of protection and furthermore, its strategic importance had also diminished after the war when the control of Southern underground communists ceased to be a matter of importance. (Lankov, 2002, p. 92). Domestic faction's downfall was hastened by its unsuccessful coup d'état, which sought to replace Kim with Pak as the leader of North Korea. According to Suh, domestic faction deemed Pak had been deprived from the leadership position by the Soviet presence, and sought to amend the situation when the war changed the power balance in North Korea. The lack of military aid from the Soviet Union and Kim's failure to reunify the country confirmed their supposition that Kim was merely a Soviet's puppet who had falsely claimed leadership of the Korean communist movement. Pak on the other hand, who was well-known across faction or group lines however represented the mainstream of the Korean communist revolution. Pak himself did not challenge Kim, but twelve of his followers, led by his most loyal and trusted lieutenant Yi Sŭng-yŏp formed a group that tried, and failed a military coup in early 1953. (Suh, 1988, pp. 126 – 130). The coup attempt was followed by number of arrests and bogus trials after the end of the war, where all major leaders of the domestic faction, except Pak, were tried on: “-- -- *planning a coup, sabotaging the Communist movement in the South. co-operation with the Japanese police during the occupation, and espionage on behalf of the United States.*” (Lankov, 2002, p. 95). All defendants confessed the ludicrous accusations, likely under the creative combination of torture, blackmail and false promises, while Pak on the other hand was placed on a house arrest, expelled from the party, and was put on the trial only in December 1955. (Lankov, 2002, pp. 93 – 100).

The Korean War was a devastating experience for both Koreas, instead of unification, even forced one, it brought ruin and drove the two Koreas bitterly apart. According to Seth the war's psychological effects on North Korean regime were noteworthy, it created a bunker mentality which manifested with obsession with mass mobilization and continual ideological indoctrination that centered on extreme nationalism and self-reliance, a constant war footing and hostility towards the South and its allies (Seth, 2010, p. 110). For Kim the war was a failure, not only he failed to unify the country, but it also gave chance for other groups in North Korea to challenge him for the leadership position. According to Suh, Kim's domestic challengers could have

succeeded, if they had combined their forces, but fortunately for Kim his rivals did not form any coalitions which allowed him to deal with them one by one. When the domestic faction challenged Kim the Yanan group abstained and the Soviet-Koreans were on Kim's side. The Chinese also stayed out of internal North Korean politics, and when the Yanan group later challenged Kim no one from the domestic faction joined them. The Soviet-Koreans also were too fractured and rootless as a group on their own to mass a credible challenge for Kim without Soviet aid. Moreover, they enjoyed privileged positions in North Korea at Kim's pleasure once the Soviet occupation forces had withdrawn. No other group was as strongly united behind its leader as Kim's guerillas, who controlled the army and Kim could continue relying on them when he confronted individual leaders of other groups. Those partisans who were temporarily kicked out of the party were reinstated quickly and supplemented with people, no matter their party affliction, who were first loyal to Kim. Any coalition that could have challenged him was crushed by publicly downgrading the leaders of other groups and purging the dangerous ones from the military. The Korean War and its aftermath showed that Kim did no longer need the Soviet army to sustain his leadership. In fact, he utilized its absence in eliminating (some of) the Soviet-Koreans and exploited his Chinese ties during the Chinese occupation of North Korea to strengthen his anti-Soviet stance. The purges of other Communist factions in the North allowed Kim to establish his narrative of the Korean revolution as canon, upon which the new North Korean identity was built for years to come. (Suh, 1988, pp. 142 – 143, 154 – 157).

4. Analysis

This chapter analyses the earlier material from the pieced together viewpoint of Machiavelli's writings. First, however, I examine the conspicuous features of North Korea: autocracy, class system, cult of personality and isolationism, before moving on the main issue of this work, Kim Il Sung, and how he fits Machiavelli's ideas about new princes and state building. In my opinion, Kim Il Sung's rise to power is a good case study of Machiavelli's political thoughts because it embodies many of the tenets discussed in *The Prince* and the *Discourses*. As it was explained earlier, *The Prince* is an extended analysis of how to acquire and maintain political power, while the *Discourses* is more of a collective work, but which is concerned over the inevitable decay of human achievements, and from where I selected parts that concern mainly autocratic political systems.

4.1 Conspicuous features of North Korean regime

Korean governmental system went through many changes during the twentieth century in a rapid pace. Before the Japanese occupation Korea was a hereditary monarchy, it had been in fact one for centuries despite its vassal status to the imperial China. In this sense the North Korean hereditary autocracy can be

seen just as a return to the original system after colonialization done by the Japan. However, In *The Prince's* terms, while Korea before the Japan's occupation was a hereditary monarchy it was ruled by the "prince and nobles", i.e. king and the yangban, not by an absolute prince, although there have been some very strong kings in Korea. Absolute monarchy and monarchy ruled by prince and nobles are separated by the distribution of power. In an absolute monarchy the prince holds all the power though he is aided in the governing by servants who work as ministers by his grace and consent, but the other subjects do not hold any special affection towards these helpers, and the prince can change them on whim (*The Prince* 4 pp. 24 – 25). North Korea after Kim Il Sung consolidated his power and got rid of the leaders of the other factions fits this description fairly well. Although Kim's guerillas and their descendants became part of the new North Korean elite, which could be described as nobles, only Kim family holds a special place in the North Korean regime and belief system, and the supreme leader can change people's stations as he sees is right. Accordingly, the guerilla group's social rise was thanks to their leader, in other words by their prince's grace, who rewarded his followers for their loyalty towards him. Therefore, it seems that an autocracy, or absolute monarchy, is rather a North Korean than Korean feature although different kind of monarchies have existed on the Korean peninsula for a long time.

According to *The Prince*, the minimal distribution of power makes absolute monarchies harder to conquer because facilitating revolts are hard in this kind of united system, but if managed they are easier to hold if the conqueror eliminates the sovereign line (*The Prince* 4 p. 25). By this view gathering all the power for an absolute monarch makes sense, especially in North Korea's case, where the regime has worked hard to create a truly united system through propaganda, selective education, and indoctrination anyway. A monarchy which is ruled by a prince and nobles who hold their rank rather by the antiquity of their lineage than through "prince's grace" are however another matter. Machiavelli claims in *The Prince* that states like this are by nature more factional than absolute monarchies, and thus easier to conquer by sowing discord among different actors. They are however harder to hold because if the nobles are not content with the new prince, and by Machiavelli's negative view on humanity they likely will not be for long, they will revolt again. (*The Prince* 4 pp. 26 – 27). Korea right before Japan's occupation was indeed very factional, and later Kovyshenko also claimed that Korean politicians were generally prone to factionalist rivalry, but was the Korean regime truly inherently factional as Machiavelli claimed in the Prince these types of monarchies are? After all, despite of the assumedly inherent factionalism of the Korean regime, Korea managed to stay independent and remarkably stable nation for centuries even when it was surrounded by strong neighboring states that tried to conquer it multiple times.

As it is, factionalism, or rather distribution of political power does not automatically mean a weak state in Machiavelli's writings. While distribution of power is frowned upon in *The Prince*, which showcases ways to acquire and maintain prince's personal power, even the most effective prince cannot govern a state by

himself alone. Consequently, deliberate distribution of power is in fact offered as a solution for factionalism in the *Discourses*. In the *Discourses* Machiavelli theorized that dividing the power between a prince, a nobility and the power of people, so all parts will watch and keep each other reciprocally in check, can counter selfish competition for personal power between different cliques that is harmful for the state as whole (1.2. p. 114 – 115). The way I see it, Machiavelli's problem with different political factions is more about their possible concentration on gathering personal power for themselves instead of focusing on the betterment of the state, than their existence itself. Furthermore, the lack of factions does not guarantee that the state fares any better for an autocratic leader might concentrate on e.g. fulfilling his personal ambitions or enjoying the luxuries his status grants for him instead of on the betterment of the state. In Korea's case, while the regime lacked the power of the people, according to Rausch the throne and the yangban balanced each other successfully for over 500 years creating a very stable Joseon state, which was however divided by the social hierarchical classes: the yangban, the commoner, and the outcasts/slaves. The state's ideology Confucianism sustained the system by emphasizing orderliness, loyalty, and proper social relations between people regulating their behavior accordingly. However, the Joseon state's Achilles heel turned out to be its inability to change according to the times, which is also a very typical human trait according to Machiavelli. Humans are in any case reluctant to change their habits, especially if they have benefitted from them before, and this kind of inertia just scales higher in big human associations like states. Machiavelli lamented in his writings how both states and their leaders need to be able to change, but how it is both against man's nature and hard to do efficiently without turning to violence (*The Prince* 25, *Discourses* 1.18). Accordingly, in Rausch's opinion in Korea the balancing between the throne and the yangban turned eventually against the regime when neither side could gain necessary strength to establish direly needed changes in the society, which had started to fracture already in the nineteenth century. The fragmentation did not happen only among the yangban but also along the class lines, because of the economic disputes, political grievances etc. aggravated by the outside powers' intrusions in Korea.

As it is, it would be absurd to deny that factionalism, and the weakness it brings with it, did not affect Korea's course in the twentieth century. However, it does not either seem that factionalism is a Korean, or North Korean feature (after Kim Il Sung got rid of or assimilated all the rival factions). At least, if it is used as a synonym for weakness, but rather a product of difficult times that would have required many big changes in the Korean society. Korea however had become factional, internally weak, and accordingly easy pickings for Japan, which annexed Korea in 1910 creating a "mixed principality" in *The Prince's* vocabulary. Unlike *The Prince* seems to divine, the yangban however did not revolt against the Japanese. Those who collaborated with them were left in peace with their wealth intact and some big landowners even thrived under them, which created bitterness among the lower classes that suffered under the Japanese and the collaborators' rule. It is however doubtful that anyone would claim that the yangban were truly content with the Japanese

rule. However, they likely thought that the risks of rising against the occupiers were bigger than the potential rewards for them, especially when Japan demonstrated its willingness to crush brutally any movement that even whiffed of Korean nationalism. While the Japan managed to crush and divide resistance movements inside of Korea, but not outside of it, it also invoked general hatred of the population against it, which in Machiavelli's opinion is one of the worst mistakes a ruler can make (*The Prince* 17 pp. 86 – 87, *Discourses* 1.9). The widespread resentment towards the Japanese and the Korean collaborators together with the partition of Korea and factionalism among its nationalistic movements however created near ideal conditions for Kim Il Sung's rise. However, before moving on that topic I take a closer look on some other features that are often considered typical for North Korea, other than the mode of rule, to examine their origins and functions in the society.

One of the conspicuous features of the North Korean society is its class system that divides the people, or in Machiavelli's vocabulary the subjects, to the core-class, the wavering class, and the hostile class. The classes are hereditary and based on people's ancestors' actions during the colonial period and North Korea's early history. The core-class is like North Korean version of the yangban, but unlike with the old Korean nobles they hold their rank because of the prince's grace. High social rank was bestowed to the core class by Kim Il Sung, officially on the merits of their revolutionary actions but more accurately because they supported Kim from early on (they are after all called the "core-class"). Additionally, Kim and his guerillas were not the only (North) Korean leftist revolutionaries but the others, together with their achievements, have been deliberately discredited or just erased from the country's official history. In my opinion, the high ranks Kim bestowed to his followers were not only gifts for their early support but also means to court their loyalty and insurance against potential uprisings. After all, if all the military leadership, and more or less the military itself, is in current leader's pocket who does not get moral scruples from using force, organizing a coup turns much harder, as the domestic faction found out. However, strict hereditary social hierarchies based on one's ancestors' actions or stations where improving one's social standing is very hard, is rather an old Korean feature than ingenious North Korean one. In the North the ranks were just reshuffled during the revolution so people who were at the bottom of the hierarchy ended up higher and vice versa. Neo-Confucianism, which was the state ideology during the Joseon era⁶¹, and its core ideas also carried over to the current North Korea and have affected the state ideology, or belief system, although it is not called Neo-Confucianism and the ideology refers rather to the leftist philosophers and Kim Il Sung as its originators than classic Chinese or Korean philosophers (who of course belonged to the yangban).

In my opinion the current state ideology however, even when it borrows heavily from different earlier Korean and foreign ideologies or belief systems and customs, should be considered an ingenious North Korean

⁶¹ Confucianism however arrived Korean peninsula far earlier and has affected the society longer than measly 500 or so years.

feature. The Juche ideology is certainly eclectic, but it is also robust, and has evolved organically according to the regime's needs. Other than several foreign and native ideologies etc., it draws inspiration from North Korea's war experience and the state's origin story which emphasize struggle against foreign oppressors, self-reliance, and Korean nationalism. It is intertwined inextricably with the veneration towards the Kim family, which is often referred by commentators as a cult of personality which both promotes the state's political legitimacy and justifies Kim family's hereditary position at the top of the regime. However, unlike many other cults of personalities, the North Korean one is not focused only on one person but on the Kim family, which is likely the reason why it did not wither up after the original object of the veneration, Kim Il Sung, died like normal cult of personalities tend to do. Instead, the cult moved the "spotlight" on the next Kim while the original supreme leader surpassed the secular leadership and entered the sphere of divinity becoming the eternal president of North Korea. In these ways the veneration towards the Kim family surpasses the usual cult of personalities and it might indeed be more accurate to refer to it as a cult of leadership, like Lim has done, where the leadership position is just transferred along the Kim line when previous supreme leader dies. It also resembles ancestor worship, which has a long tradition in Korea and other Asian nations, but where the filial piety is directed towards the leader of the state and Kim family instead of one's own parents or ancestors. The familism and the cult in general evokes such positive emotions among the masses towards the Kim dynasty, especially its founder, that Machiavelli likely could not have even imagined such an accomplishment, even in an absolute hereditary monarchy which can lean more on tradition than non-hereditary regimes. However, because of North Korea's closed nature it is hard to estimate people's true feelings towards the Kim family, though according to Lim (2015) even the contemporary defectors who have lived years outside of North Korea regard Kim Il Sung highly even when they are critical towards younger Kims and the state itself. Be as it may, the state ideology works like a religion can in Machiavelli's books, and together with the state's well-developed propaganda machine helped to transform the poor peasants of the colonial era into North Korean citizens who learned to place the state's wellbeing above their own. Confucianism also, which has influenced North Korean society greatly, is on religions' yardstick excellent belief system for governing and securing a state with its emphasis on e.g. orderliness, loyalty and social harmony which rises from proper relations between human beings.

The last conspicuous North Korean feature I examine here is the country's isolationism, though some reasons for it and aspects about it are beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, the country's isolation has more than one reason, and from the North Korean regime's viewpoint the isolation has both positive and negative effects. On one hand the isolation helps to minimize foreign influence in the country, which makes controlling the citizens, or subjects, easier for the regime when it can monitor and manipulate people's access to outside world and information about it with little effort. However, on the other hand the ostracism of North Korea and economic sanctions etc., often led by the United States, is very damaging for the state's economy and

hits hardest on the lower classes of the society. Isolationism however is not just North Korean feature but has longer history in Korea. Some researchers point out the Chinese and Neo-Confucianism's influence behind the nation's reclusiveness, which together with the Korea's history of being surrounded by strong neighboring states that have tried to conquer it from time to time have produced a reclusive nation. Additionally, both Japan and China which belong(ed) to the same East Asian network as Korea have also demonstrated reclusive behavior or disinterest towards the wider world during their history, even before the intrusive arrival of the western powers. Korea however took it a step farther, especially when the westerners truly arrived the area and tried to make East Asian nations open themselves by force. North Korea's early history builds up on this legacy of voluntary isolation and has amplified its reclusiveness. As Seth has noted, Korean War produced (literally) a real bunker mentality among North Koreans which has manifested, among other things, as a continual ideological indoctrination centered on extreme nationalism, self-reliance, constant war footing and hostility towards the South and its allies (Seth, 2010, pp. 110). North Korea also did not just face ROK forces and United States' during the war, but also United Nations', led by the United States, which might have made it feel like majority of the world had turned against it because of a war that was in the minds of North Koreans justifiable. Additionally, the regime might have also felt that it was abandoned by the Soviet Union which had before the war supported it eagerly, even if Kim was starting to get fed up with Soviets' intrusions in North Korean politics but did not give it military aid during the war when things got serious. All this however does not mean that North Korea has not cultivated contacts to other countries, other than Soviet Union and China, but majority of this networking happened after 1955 and later has largely withered away because of strict UN sanctions and ostracism caused by North Korea's nuclear weapons program, (and other weapons of mass destruction policies) and belligerency. At any case, it seems that isolationism is not purely North Korean feature but a sequel of an older Korean tendency, which has been fueled by the state's war experience and other nations' reactions to the policies North Korea has decided to pursue.

4.2 Kim Il Sung as a new prince

If we consider Kim Il Sung, North Korea and Soviet Union from the point of view from Machiavelli's *the Prince*, one thing stands out immediately. Because Kim rose to power through Soviets' machinations, he is a "prince" who became one through "the powers of others and fortune" (Skinner, 2000, p. 27), rather than by his own "arms and virtue" (ibid). However, because Kim was Soviets' chosen man and their aims aligned during the early history of North Korea, at least from the Soviet occupation till the Korean War, separating what Soviets did and what Kim personally did is not that consequential for this study, although there are also some points in this chapter where I have emphasized Kim's role or characteristics when I felt that there is ample evidence for the case. However, it must be admitted that researchers are quite divided over the issue of Kim's (and the natives') contribution to North Korean revolution. Some see that majority of the changes in North Korea

were done mainly by the Koreans and Kim, with some input from the Soviets, while others see Kim little more than a Soviets' puppet, at least during the early years of North Korea. My opinion about Kim's role in North Korea's revolution falls somewhere between these two ends. While I do not think Kim would have become the supreme leader of North Korea without Soviets' influence, it is not even sure he would have wanted to become one, I would not write him off as just Soviets' puppet, mainly because what happened after their withdrawal, which as far as I see it, showed Kim's true colors. Additionally, I find it unlikely that Soviets were constantly holding Kim's hand in every issue during the regime's building process, though he was without a doubt guided in it by Soviet experts. After all, it was in Soviets' interest to erect a Soviet-friendly buffer state in North Korea, which logically would need to be strong and stable for any effectiveness, which in turn would have been difficult with a too weak and inexperienced leader to control his own state. Additionally, Soviet occupation authorities let Kim handle some of the big issues alone, like Sinŭiju incident, and placed him into positions with real executive power than just positions of prominence, which in my opinion speaks for the "Soviet training wheels" argument. In the end, however, we just do not know enough about Kim and North Korea's history to make any definitive judgements about this issue, but if or eventually when North Korean archives are opened to the researchers, the stances about Kim's role in the North Korea's building process will likely change. In any case, I argue that even when I often separate the actions between Soviets and Kim, because in truth they were not a singular entity, they had a common goal which was in Machiavelli's vocabulary, to put a new prince at the top of a new state and because of this we can look Soviets' "regime building actions" as the prince himself would have done them. Alternatively, their cooperation could be also looked from a framework where Kim indeed was a prince, and the Soviets in North Korea were just his (compulsory) advisors.

In *The Prince* Machiavelli claimed that princes who do not rise their positions through their own merits (except possibly if they inherited their principality) are on thinner ice than the ones who managed to do it by their own power. His main argument against these princes' success is that their fate hangs on their patron's goodwill and fortune, both of which are fickle things. Additionally, these princes often lack the necessary skills, or power, to maintain their position because they do not know how to command men nor possess troops that are loyal to them, which means that when their benefactor withdraws his support, the new prince will topple down. (*The Prince* 7 p. 35). They might also lack the knowledge of war itself which is considered essential for a new prince, for a prince who does not understand war cannot lead his armies (in person) and thus will not earn glory even if his armies are victorious. Instead, he may fall prey to his own ingratitude and suspicion towards his generals which makes him look petty. (*The Prince* 14 pp. 75 – 76, *Discourses* 1.29). Arguably, not leading his armies in person can also make the prince look weak, which can attract challengers for his position. On top of this, he will be also condemned by his soldiers and because of this cannot depend upon them and is thus left unsecure (*The Prince* 14, p. 75). However, despite the leadership position was

indeed granted to Kim Il Sung by the Soviet Union, he was not Machiavelli's stereotypical prince who rose to his position "through the powers of others and fortune". Rather, Kim possessed many important features of an auspicious new prince; he was a guerilla leader who understood war, knew both Korean terrain and how to command men, and came with his own tight knit group of soldiers whose loyalty was always first to him, not the Soviet Union, communists or other Korean groups. Accordingly, it was largely thanks to the guerilla group's loyalty and willingness to close ranks around Kim why he managed to stay in power, despite that numerically the guerillas were a pittance compared to the other communist factions. Kim also led troops in person during the Korean War, and though the war was not successful, Kim dodged the bullet by blaming others for mistakes made during it and punishing the scapegoats, though briefly if they were his own men. A prince, after all, has an obligation towards his supporters and cannot use too strong measures against them, otherwise they are likely to seek another master. Kim's military experiences also did not originate only from his guerilla years, during which he had learned to act ruthlessly when necessary, but also from the Soviet officer school, where he had made a good impression with the right people. It is true, however, that Kim did not know how to do the governmental changes, like create a mass party or kickstart the whole North Korean government, but for these skill deficiencies he had (compulsory) Soviet advisors, namely Colonel Ignatiev, Major-General Romanenko, and Colonel-General Shtykov.

In my opinion, the knowledge of war, ability to command and other qualities connected to this sphere of warfare are perhaps the most important "virtue" Machiavelli's prince can possess. According to *the Prince's* chapter 15, common princely virtues lead princes rather towards ruin than glory because other humans will not act according the same moral code. Other virtues, like e.g. religiousness or in Korean context filial piety are easier to fake, i.e. for the prince to keep appearance of attribute X, especially when he is supposed to keep majority of the people at an arm's length, at minimum, and act composed at every situation. Accordingly, Kim Il Sung's public persona was cultivated carefully, first by the Soviets and later by the state's propaganda machine, so much about his true self or history are obfuscated and the trend has continued with the other leaders from the Kim family. Thus, in my opinion, despite Kim was supported by the Soviet Union, he rather embodies *the Prince's* ideal prince than the very potential failure of a one who became a prince through power of others and fortune and not on his own merits.

Another point to Kim's favor from Machiavelli's point of view, which is also connected to the earlier one, is his and the Soviets' concentration on developing the native North Korean armed forces from early on, which led to the militarization of the whole society. Machiavelli claimed in *Discourses* that states cannot make themselves secure except by being powerful (*Discourses* 1.1) and in *The Prince* that without arms there cannot be secure foundations for a state, and without such foundations a prince's power will be inevitably ruined (*The Prince* 12 p. 63). Soviets evidently agreed with this notion when they started to develop North Korean armed forces in 1946, first in secret to not provoke the Americans but later more openly, and worked

hard to produce a modern, well-functioning armed forces for North Korea. Kim also echoed Machiavelli's sentiment in KPA's founding ceremony when he declared that a state without its own military cannot be fully independent and that KPA would be a foundation of the DPRK which true freedom and peace would be only guaranteed by strength and military superiority. Before the KPA was established Kim was of course still backed up by his guerillas who were quickly appointed into high positions in the security forces and the army, under development, but he had to lean also on Red Army e.g. in disarming the Yanan faction, which from Kim's point of view in Machiavelli's vocabulary was made from auxiliary troops. In Machiavelli's opinion, good arms, however, could be made only from the prince's own subjects because they alone hold the necessary love and devotion to hold *their* government or maintain *their* kingdom, while all the others had contrasting motivations which made them unreliable for the prince (*Discourses* 1.43 *The Prince* 12 – 13). Thankfully for Kim however, it was Soviets' interest to secure and make North Korea a stable state, but also not to spent too much resources or effort in it either compared to e.g. countries in the Soviet bloc, which allowed him more leeway after the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from the peninsula and the Korean War. Compared to Machiavelli's own Florentine *arme propriere* the KPA however was closer to the Roman ideal Machiavelli praised in his books because of the economic privileges and social status the army and its personnel obtained, which makes sense because it was filled with Kim's own men, and his subjects, and a prince should reward good work and loyalty.

Third point in Kim's favor, and again tied to war, was the Korean War which showed that Kim was a leader who did not ignore potential future problems, was unafraid to seize the moment when opportunity for the unification of Korea, or glory, rose, and despite of not winning the war, muddled successfully through it and stayed in power without Soviet support. Machiavelli argued in *the Prince* that a wise prince does not just look at current problems but also at possible future ones, which are easier to nip in a bud rather than trying to fix a problem that has been allowed to grow so big that everyone can see it (*The Prince* 3 pp. 18 – 19). In *the Discourses* he continued about the same topic and wrote that princes should consider who are their future adversaries and whose help they may need in the future and treat those parties well before the necessity to secure their aid manifests. This is because giving benefits to people when danger is at the door is foolish, for the masses will not think they owe their benefits to the prince then but to his adversaries. They will also fear that once the danger passes the benefits will be taken from them and because of this will not feel any obligation for the prince. (*Discourses* 1.32, 1.51). As I explained in the previous chapter about Korean War, both South and North Korea were hostile towards each other and Kim and Pak feared, or at least claimed of being afraid that, if South Korea was allowed to develop (its armed forces) freely, it would eventually attack the North because unified Korea was something both sides desired, but both also wanted the unification happen under the leadership of their side. Soviets put more effort in building North Korean armed forces than Americans to the ROK forces, and after Soviets' withdrawal was followed by the Americans', North Korea

had military superiority. Additionally, Kim had already guaranteed Chinese aid from Mao, to whom he had loaned North Korean troops earlier which gained Kim both experienced soldiers and debt of gratitude from Mao. North Korean society was at this point already militarized and Kim had treated both the masses and North Korean armed forces well and appointed his trusty guerillas at the top positions in the KPA, which guaranteed him aid from both parties. If United States had not come with the UN forces to save Rhee's regime, Kim would have conquered the South Korea and possibly unified the Korean peninsula under his rule. The war however was derailed from North Korean perspective when United States joined the fight with its allies against the estimations of Kim, Mao and Stalin. Nevertheless, the war turned out to be for Kim rather the maker than the breaker when he weathered through it while staying in power, got rid of his rivals inside North Korea, and slipped from the Soviets' control, which is not so bad for a war lost. As Machiavelli put it in *the Discourses*, even in a situation where there is a coalition of princes warring against a single prince⁶², he can be victorious if he manages to weather through the first shock by his courage and strength, and afterwards by biding events with temporizing (3.9 p. 449).

Kim's rise, however, was not only thanks to Soviet effort and his own, but affected by e.g. the partition of the country (which admittedly happened partly thanks to the Soviet Union), distribution of the population (i.e. elite was concentrated more on the South while the North was dominated by poor peasantry), fragmentation among the national movements which created disunity among his rivals, and Japan's earlier mismanagement of their Korean colony which made in theory any change welcome for the masses, and was what the Soviet Union offered to North Koreans. In other words, developments which were beyond Kim's control, aka fortune, created a favorable time and chance for his rise. Other Korean communist factions were unable or unwilling to form a coalition against Kim, even after Red Army withdrew from North Korea, which allowed Kim to tackle his rivals one by one and play them against each other, while the guerillas' cohesiveness was one the major reasons why Kim managed to stay in power despite that guerillas were by far the smallest communist faction in North Korea. The partition itself also diminished number of potential rivals for the top positions in the North Korea because majority of the big revolutionary names flocked to the capital city Seoul in the South and drained the potential opposition in the North. Additionally, Japan's brutal policies in Korea evoked hatred against it among the masses and created almost ideal situation for a new prince to take over the area.

Moving on to the building of the regime, in *The Prince* Machiavelli wrote that states that spring up suddenly lack protective roots or supports against unfavorable situations and are prone for destruction unless the new

⁶² Although admittedly North Korea would have been conquered by the U.S.-UN coalition without Chinese intervention, so Kim was not against the coalition alone. It was, however, also in the Chinese interests to have a socialist buffer state between it and United States' Asian allies and its actions also somewhat fit Machiavelli's advice in the Prince for a situation like this. According to Machiavelli, the prince should never stay neutral if there is a fight between neighboring rulers but pick a side, preferably the weaker one because allying oneself with the stronger party can place the prince under its power. If the prince does not pick a side, the winner will threaten the prince next and the loser will not befriend the prince either, but after taking a side, even if your ally does not win he will be grateful.

prince consolidates his power quickly and lays some firm foundations for his new state (*The Prince* 6 pp. 35 – 36). Accordingly, the Red Army was quick to seize power in the North Korea to maintain order (despite some early hiccups) and lay down some basic rules during the first days of the occupation. North Korea however, despite of being a “new state” was built on the rubble of a much older, stable, state, and many social structures and customs carried over to the new one, which likely made it more stable than a completely new state would have been. Despite the split along the class lines in the society Koreans had e.g. common language, values (e.g. respect for education), and culture which made achieving unity easier than it would have been in some completely random amalgamation of a state. Many things however were also changed, as Machiavelli advises princes to do in this situation. For example, according to Machiavelli, when a prince has acquired a new state, he should organize the government entirely anew, especially if his station is insecure. He should point new men into government with new titles and powers, make poor rich, destroy old cities and build new ones as well as transfer inhabitants from one place to another. Everything should be changed, so every rank, honor, grade or wealth should be recognized as coming from him and not from the old system. (*Discourses* 1.26). The reason for this is to tie subjects to the new prince because people who do not owe their power to the prince might not be loyal to him and are thus untrustworthy, as well as the people who have been badly hurt by the prince. Machiavelli e.g. also wrote in the *Discourses* that it is extremely unwise of the new prince to first deprive someone of his kingdom and then leave him with his life, for he will always carry a grudge against the new prince. Even if the prince tries to conciliate with his old opponents with benefits, their injuries are never healed, especially when the benefits are smaller than their earlier possessions. (*Discourses* 3.4). Subjects on the other hand should be rewarded for good behavior so they are encouraged to act similarly in future. According to *The Prince*, the prince should also secure good ministers’ devotion, i.e. those who work for the advantage of the state (and not their own) with riches, shared honors and cares so that they are fastened to the prince tightly enough to either float or sink with him (22). Kim’s guerillas for example were handled like this, for their success hanged solely on Kim’s success and without his patronage they could not have achieved such high positions, and years later after Kim had become an absolute monarch in North Korea arguably everyone in a high position became tied to him and their position hanged on his will.

A complete overturn of the earlier system, to a large degree, is exactly what Soviet Union and Kim did in North Korea. Soviets started changing North Korea right after the beginning of the occupation and Kim finished it later, on his own terms when he reorganized the government without Soviet input. In any case, the colonial regime was dismantled in North Korea, old elite which has collaborated with the Japanese lost its privileges and private large properties which were distributed among the poor peasants, and the whole social hierarchy was turned on its head. For the peasant majority, which means the whole North Korean majority, Kim was associated with the land reform which was the main source of their new better living

situation. Soviet political system was implanted in North Korea with organizations, institutions, and customs that enforced the new system (like rigged voting), new people were appointed to the emerging government, and the whole state ideology was turned on leftist tracks. The number of people from different factions in governmental organizations were calculated carefully by the Soviets, so even if the final product looked “fair” they had ensured that their side, i.e. communists would win, if they cooperated (which they did). Later when Kim had mostly consolidated his power in North Korea he did not care anymore about people’s factional or political backgrounds, the only requirement was just loyalty to him, and supposedly some ability for the desired position. In any case, even inhabitants moved around, (and cities got destroyed, but because of the war) although this happened rather voluntarily when those who did not like the direction North Korea was taking voted with their feet, which as a bonus eroded opposition to the new order in the country. Additionally, transference also happened to the other direction when leftist moved to the North from the South. In any case, the possibility of transferring between Koreas was also likely one of the key points why the revolution in the North proceeded so peacefully. For the elite and other opposers it was easier to just move to the “other Korea” than risk their lives to keep the situation from changing. If there, however, would not have been a chance to swap between the Koreas, the revolution would have likely turned much bloodier and Soviets and Kim would have had to act more cruelly which could have created a negative backlash in society and sow seeds for potential uprisings in the future. The change in societal order however was surprisingly painless which reinforced the regime’s fairness and legitimacy in the masses’ eyes.

In *The Prince*, Machiavelli argued that after handling the previous leadership of the state, which was done by the Soviets, the prince should turn his gaze towards the population of the country. Population’s opinion about the prince is a matter between life and death for him, and the prince should never let the situation slide so far that the people start to hate or despise him, for it will eventually lead to a revolt and end of his reign. If the population is hostile towards the prince, he should do his utmost to change their opinion about him and the first step in this is to find out what they really want. (*The Prince* 17, *Discourses* 1.16). Overall understanding humans and how they tick is essential for a prince because his job hangs largely on his ability to manipulate people. In addition, Machiavelli wrote in *The Prince* that having majority of the population on prince’s side, or staying at least neutral towards him, is one of the best insurances a prince can have against his own subjects. If things are at least somewhat satisfactory for the majority, and the prince takes care not to offend them or the elite too badly, there is a smaller likelihood for conspiracies because those who plot such things will not have the masses backing them up. Although, Machiavelli admits that generally it is impossible for a prince to not be hated by someone, especially for a new prince, but he should always try not to become hated by the masses. If this is not possible he should instead try not to become hated by the most powerful faction (*The Prince* 19), which is the route Japanese took with the yangban. Kim’s start with the North Korean majority however was far better than potential hostility conquerors usually face. The majority’s

stance towards him was neutral because hardly anyone knew Kim in North Korea, but he on the other hand likely understood them and their desires quite well because of his own background. The Soviets who actually conquered North Korea were also received mainly in positive manner, and Kim arriving in a Red Army uniform did not make him look like a lackey but rather a part of the forces that had liberated Koreans from Japanese tyranny. Additionally, because Kim had acted mainly outside of Korea he was not smeared with the stigma of a collaborator, which made him look especially virtuous to ordinary North Koreans.

Machiavelli wrote in the *Discourses* that as a rule people under a new ruler want two things: to avenge themselves against those who have enslaved them before and recover their liberty. According to Machiavelli the prince can satisfy the first wish entirely, which in fact is what the Soviets chose to do which won them North Koreans' favor, but the second one only partly. However, while the prince cannot make the people entirely free, he should examine carefully the reasons why they want to be free. Generally, a small part of the population wants to be free to have power to affect the state, while the majority wishes liberty because it brings greater security to their lives. The prince can satisfy the majority by institutions and laws that confirm the general security of the people, or subjects, and the power of the prince at the same time. A minority on the other hand can be dealt, either by giving them enough public honors and offices to satisfy them, or just liquidating them. (*Discourses* 1.16). As it has been mentioned many times already, majority of the North Koreans were poor peasants and carried a grudge towards the Japanese and Korean elite who had profited from their suffering (i.e. bourgeois in Marxist terms). Punishing the collaborators, even if they were forced to do it or they were only suspected of doing it (likely after all the blatantly voluntary collaborators had left the North Korea long ago), became one of Kim's favorite weapons against his political rivals, anyone who whiffed of it and disagreed with Kim, could be basically purged without protests. Soviet Union as a communist nation also understood these masses' feelings well and had an ideological apparatus and well versed how-to-do-list of "democratic changes" needed for creating a socialist North Korea under their chosen man, Kim Il Sung. Communists offered North Koreans changes like modernization of the country, fairer distribution of wealth and opportunities for former lower classes to improve their lives. Additionally, although Machiavelli is stingy about the subjects' liberty, North Koreans, especially the youth and women, truly felt liberated and gained more political freedom, though true freedom turned out to be more of an illusion than truth in the end. Majority however likely felt that they had been given unforeseen chances to affect the state's and their own affairs with votes, access to better education which enabled social mobility, and possibility to join political organizations which opened even more doors in life. Many of these changes likely made people also feel more secure when they suddenly had some chances to affect their own fates. Numerous political organizations the majority belonged to, and were strongly encouraged to join, also created feeling of being a part of something bigger, which was amplified by the state propaganda which was nearly impossible to avoid.

However, according to Machiavelli while the prince can (try to) win people over, e.g. by giving them higher standing in society, not all people can be tied to the prince. It is true that Soviets got rid of the old elite and colonial establishments in the Korean government in the North, unlike Americans in the South, but they did leave some of the old prestigious political powerhouses, namely Cho Man-sik, alone. Another Korean politician who was in this sense cut from the same cloth as Cho, i.e. did not own his position for the Soviets or Kim, was Pak from the domestic faction of Korean communists (as well as leaders and members from other factions who did not submit to Kim) and eventually both turned out to be more harmful than useful for Soviets and Kim. It is possible that both Cho and Pak thought that they could become “new princes” in North Korea after the country’s liberation, and partition, but were derailed by the Soviets and Kim Il Sung. Both were, using Machiavelli’s terms, also unarmed prophets like Savonarola, though Pak and his circle had at least some military power, and his timing for the coup was credible but the plan was likely foiled in the end because Kim controlled the army and the security forces. It seems that Cho on the other hand was either caught unaware about the change in plans, made a terrible miscalculation about the nationalists’ power in North Korea, or the Moscow conference’s outcome just turned out to be the last straw that broke the camel’s back. Kim or the Soviets however were not above using Cho and Pak to further their own aims, and both were betrayed only after cooperation with them would have brought more losses than profit. Betrayal however is not wrong in Machiavelli’s books. Rather, moral flexibility and willingness to turn against one’s earlier allies according to the changing situations is yet another princely characteristic, or quality, Machiavelli praised in *the Prince* and Kim, and the Soviets, seemed to possess. Soviets did not hesitate to drop the North Korean nationalists when enough communists had returned to the country and cooperation with them turned sour and unnecessary after the Moscow conference. Kim also was ready to strike against other Korean communist groups one after another to thin out the competition when his position in North Korea was stable enough. Soviets’ unwillingness to help North Korea militarily during the war could also be looked as a betrayal, at least that is how North Koreans likely felt it, and Kim’s struggle for independence from Soviet control could also be perceived as one. As we see, both Soviets and Kim were willing to change or try to seize an opportunity when one appeared, which according to Machiavelli is a very human thing to do. In Machiavelli’s books people are by nature bad and act right only upon compulsion, they are also greedy, selfish and fickle which makes them untrustworthy. In *the Prince* Machiavelli claims that princes should never hesitate to break promises they have made if fulfilling them has turned against their interests because others will not hesitate to do the same to them when they sense an opportunity for advance (*The Prince* 18). A state however would never work if everyone was backstabbing the others for personal advancement all the time, but there are ways to pacify people and tie them together for common cause, i.e. the state. To achieve this a prince must have “muscle” to compel others if needed, otherwise he will just end up like Savonarola, but also always reward good behavior so people are more inclined to follow his lead. For Kim, it was both Soviets’ presence

and his guerillas, who came to control the army and the security forces, who worked as this “muscle” and guerillas at least were also rewarded amply.

In the *Discourses* Machiavelli wrote that while the rule of one has some clear downsides, single person as a founder or an organizer of a state might be better, and faster than a host of people, for there are no confliction opinions or battles between egos with a single founder (*Discourses* 1.9 pp. 138 – 139). North Korea, despite what the state’s official history says, was not organized solely by the effort of Kim Il Sung, but it is possible that it looked somewhat like that and looks are what truly matter for a prince. While it was the Soviet Union which truthfully hold the wheel in the state building process (in the big decisions), while giving at least for a short while an illusion of free North Korean politics, it did its best to execute all its administrative directives and decisions through Kim Il Sung. As a result, all the good deeds Soviets did behind the scenes and their positive outcomes, like the land reform, were associated with Kim which inflated his appeal. Soviets also made it very clear for other Korean communist factions that acting against Kim meant acting against Soviet Union itself, which would not be healthy for the nay-sayer’s political career, or life expectancy. In a way the prince’s necessary cruelty or fearful reputation, discussed in *The Prince*’s chapters 8 and 17, was outsourced in the beginning to the Soviet Union before Kim gained enough power and support among North Koreans to stand on his own, which together with the presence of the Red Army brought security or stability in the new state when no one dared to step out of the line. In this sense it is arguable that North Korea had a single founder or organizer, but a cosmetic one. However, while many of Kim’s political aims were at the beginning the product of a Soviet collective and not his own, he was not just a symbolic leader or a figurehead like Yanan faction’s Kim Tu-bong. Additionally, for Machiavelli’s prince though, it does not necessarily matter who thought up the best way to organize the state or who did most work to achieve the objective, because for the prince it is enough if he has the final choice in the matter and it looks like the prince did it, especially if the results are good. It should be also remembered that it was in fact the Soviets who reinvented Kim the revolutionary hero for their own needs, the regime just ran off with the idea after Soviet Union’s grip over Kim Il Sung and North Korea slackened, as was done with North Korean communism or socialism also. Kim was not originally the final authority in North Korea, nor a supernatural Übermensch later editing of the history and the cult around Kim family has made him to be, but he was without a doubt a shrewd and patient man who was courageous enough to seize the moment when fortune offered it to him. Kim certainly lacked some stateman’s skills and visions for a regime that was created in North Korea, but he held both Soviets’ trust and true power in the governmental organs and by following his orders faithfully and bidding his time for a chance to struggle free from the Soviet control, he managed to really become the final authority in North Korea.

Conclusions

When we consider some of the conspicuous features of North Korea, i.e. autocracy, class system, Kim family cult and isolationism from longer viewpoint they turn out to be rather logical than scandalous. Most of them can trace some origin into the older Korean culture but have evolved in different ways to maintain function in the society. Hereditary monarchy has been a longstanding feature in Korea, which disappeared during the colonial period, but made a comeback in North Korea when all the power was deliberately collected for the supreme leader, which made him in other words an absolute monarch. The class system also has been part of the Korean society for a long time and supported the current order in the country, which was turned on its head in North Korea, and because together with the land reform benefitted the majority, it also secured their support for the new leader. Its function, however, basically remained the same, as well as its hereditariness. With an absolute ruler however, subjects became more dependent on the leader's goodwill. The family cult also, which I deemed the only pure North Korean feature, though it too has been influenced by older Korean customs, including the hereditary monarchy, has a clear function(s) in the society. The cult, which I think should rather be called cult of leadership than personality, maintains the leaders' political legitimacy and justifies the system of hereditary succession. It is also tied to the North Korea's origin narrative and generates unity in the society and goodwill or affection towards the Kim family. Isolationism also has historical roots in Korea, but out of all the examined features it is rather a double-edged sword and a two-way street, which might be rather a Korean answer for negative influences from outside of the country than an innate feature. Additionally, most of the world isolates North Korea voluntarily.

As a recapitulation, North Korea was a new state, born from a partition of an older state which had gone through oppressive colonialization before it was liberated, or conquered, by the Soviet Union and the United States. The colonization and erosion of the Joseon state before that had left majority of the population poor and unhappy with the current leadership and elite of the country, where the Japanese had managed to evoke general hatred upon themselves. Soviet Union then, unlike Japan, treated North Koreans more carefully and decided to erect a new Soviet-friendly regime there to counter its rival(s) nearby instead of annexing the newly conquered area. This objective was achieved by positioning Soviets' chosen man, Kim Il Sung, at the top of the soon emerging new government and numerous changes, prepared by the Soviets, were executed through him. Soviets did their best to inflate Kim's fame, which however was based on kernel of truth, and created very positive image of him among the masses whose life situations had become better because of the changes in the society. Also, because the changes were executed through Kim, it created an appearance that he was behind them which won the people's support for him, and eventually through ideological education morphed into love or adoration by the masses of such degree that Machiavelli likely had not imagined such possible even in his wildest dreams. The regime was bolstered through different social organizations which aimed to educate people and change them into obedient subjects who had learnt to

place the public good over their own private good. Soviets and the regime did not forget development of native armed forces either, which started early and the KPA, along with the security organizations was dominated by Kim's guerillas and became quickly one of the cornerstones of the state. Korea's recent history had made it ripe for a revolution and Soviets' own ideology Marxism (or Stalinism) had also right ideological tools or mapped stepping stones for changing a country from inside of the system. From Soviets' point of view putting Kim per se on the top of the new state was not the main objective, he was only a means to an end and for them it did not so much matter who ruled the North Korea, as long as the state was ruled by someone who steered it according to their visions of what future should look like in Asia. For Kim on the other hand reaching the highest position and staying there was much more personal objective, though it is unlikely that he struggled for the top position for the sake of power alone.

Kim Il Sung possessed many of Machiavelli's auspicious new prince's qualities, especially those which concern warfare (and are most important for a new prince), which is not surprising considering his own guerilla background. The development of North Korea also follows many of Machiavelli's advices from *The Prince* and the *Discourses* although I do not claim that it was done deliberately by Soviets or Kim. However, although Kim is close to an ideal of Machiavelli's new prince, duplicating his success by just following his actions (or Machiavelli's advices) would be hard in modern world for his rise depended originally on the Soviets' support, whose socialist state building process' succession also dependent very much on the earlier Korean situation and the partition of the country. North Koreans in 1940s wanted a change very much and despite the second World War and despised colonial regime, the country was not in chaos and state building process was easier to start than in some war-ravaged country with no laws. Additionally, the partition with two different Koreas offered easy and bloodless solution for most of the opposition, which prevented future uprisings inside of the country, as well as thinned and weakened Kim's competition for top positions. However, it cannot be denied that Kim also was a leader with a vision, moral flexibility and patience to wait for the right moment to struggle free from Soviet control and betray his earlier allies when they turned out to be rather hindrance than help, without appearing like a backstabber. Kim also understood North Koreans and their desires, and secured adoration of the masses for himself by giving the majority what they wanted, which secured him their support. Although he was aided in the state building process by Soviets, in the end he reaped the thanks for their, and other Korean leftist revolutionaries' hard work, and is remembered worldwide as the founder of North Korea.

Appendix A

Korea: geographical context and historical social structures

Korea's history has been defined largely by its geographic position and Korean peninsula, while a bit isolated, has been surrounded by strong nations for a long time. Because of this, Korea has often faced pressure from both land and sea, which has likely fueled the country's tendency to try isolate itself. According to Seth, the repetitive invasions has led to a view where some see Korean past as: "*--- a saga of the struggles of a smaller society to resist control or assimilation by larger, more aggressive neighbors: the Chinese, the Japanese, and the Inner Asian peoples that border them on north, the Russians being the successors of the last.*" (Seth, 2006, p. 2). For Koreans the tug of war between the regional powers over Korea during the nineteenth century was just the latest chapter of this ongoing saga of outsiders trying to intervene in Korean business. However, despite the pressure, Korea managed to stay largely independent for a long time, and the country has a long and continuous sense of history as well as stable borders.⁶³ From the seven hundred to the beginning of twentieth century there were only three dynasties that ruled Korea: (United) Silla (676 – 935), Koryŏ⁶⁴ (935 – 1392) and Joseon⁶⁵ or Yi dynasty (1329 – 1910⁶⁶). However, according to Seth, despite its substantial independence Korea, like many other Asian nations, became early a part of East Asian civilization centered in China. For a long time, Korea imported most of its ideas about policy and government from China and accepted a worldview where China was seen a center of the universe and Korea's adherence for it was rather a matter of pride than source of shame. This adherence although did not mean a loss of identity for Korea, nor did the Korean king's vassalage to the Chinese emperor meant loss of an independence. Korea's station as a tributary state was usually only ceremonial, and the country opposed fiercely China's attempts to interfere in its domestic affairs. (ibid).

Korea is often seen as a very homogenous country, and the outside pressure has likely helped to weld it together very tightly. Korea does not have any significant minorities, and the Korean language differs greatly from its neighboring languages, though originally the writing system was adopted from China⁶⁷. According to Seth, some historians argue that because of Korea's ethno-linguistic homogeneity, geographic isolation and the country's long political unity, Korea's national consciousness or identity as a culture emerged long before the nineteenth century, which brought the western ideas about nationalism to Korea through Japan. Other researchers, e.g. Andre Smith (2002) and Gi-Wook Shin (2006), however question both early Korean nationalism (Seth, 2016 p. 4), and the idea homogeneity. For example, Fuqua J.L. (2011) has argued that

⁶³ See appendix B for Korea's borders during (United) Silla, Koryŏ and Joseon.

⁶⁴ Also known as Goryeo.

⁶⁵ Also known as Chosŏn.

⁶⁶ Korea's name was changed briefly to Daehan Empire on 12.10.1897, when king Gojong ascended the throne as an *emperor*. Han Young Woo (2010, p. 72). The name change was likely meant to emphasize Korea's station and independence from China, and Japan, which conquered the nation in 1910.

⁶⁷ The Korean alphabet Hangul was created in fifteenth hundred during Joseon period.

northern part of Korea was seen since Joseon dynasty as an outland, and its residents an underclass people until the Japanese colonialization which treated all Koreans equally badly (Fuqua, 2011, p. 6). In similar vein, Seth has pointed out that despite Korea was integrated a single nation during Koryŏ period, the society maintained a strict three-part division into aristocrats, commoners and low-born, which characterized the Korean society till the end of the nineteenth century (Seth, 2006, p. 91).

Korean society has been characterized by rigid hierarchies and hereditary class lines for a long time. According to Seth, Korean concept of kingship and the idea of centralized monarchical state emerged during three kingdoms period⁶⁸ and though Korean aristocratic – monarchical system went through some changes, it stayed fundamentally same since Silla period. (Seth, 2006, pp. 41, 223 – 224). In theory the king was at the head of the power pyramid, but as Lewis has pointed out, Korean kingship has not been always very strong (Lewis, 2016, p. 19). According to Seth, the relative weakness of Korean monarchy might be traced to year 654, when the original royal Kim line became extinct and the crown was transferred to a one of the cadet branches, which created together the highest level of aristocracy, chin'gol (true bone). The new royal line was just first among chin'gol equals, and thereafter Korean kings were frequently challenged by powerful nobles. (Seth 2006, pp. 37 – 42). Thus, Korean aristocracy did not own their status to the king, but as Machiavelli wrote in the Prince, hold their rank by the antiquity of their lineage.

The name yangban, which has referred to Korean aristocracy since Koryŏ period, literally means “two sides”. These sides referred to military officials (muban) and civil officials (munban) and surprisingly it was the civil officials who became to dominate the society, and during Joseon period most of the yangban did not have any military background and disdained warrior skills. The society was legally divided into good people (yangmin) and base or mean people (ch'ŏnmin), but in truth it was stratified into three hierarchical groups: yangban, commoners and the base people consisting of slaves and outcaste groups. Person's ancestry determined his social class and aristocratic status became linked to officeholding, which in theory was open for all yangmin through civil examination system, but as Joseon society became more ossified family history and pedigree became the only basis for determining who could take the civil exam. (Seth, 2006, pp. 91, 99, 158 – 160). The civil examination system came to Korea from China together with Confucianism, which variation, Neo-Confucianism became official ideology of Joseon Korea, with a Korean twist: while China had greater social mobility, Korea was more concerned about hereditary. According to Seth, the basic ideas of Confucianism were based on proper social relationships between people, which were guided by three cardinal principles: loyalty of subjects to their ruler, filial piety and maintaining distinction⁶⁹ between men and women. The ethical norms emphasized (among other things) the importance of family relations, the hierarchical nature of society, the necessity for order and harmony and respects for elders and authority. The

⁶⁸ The kingdoms were Paekche, Koguryŏ and Silla, which eventually conquered the other two.

⁶⁹ Which meant that women had to display chastity, obedience and faithfulness.

king was a father ruler of Korea and at once: “ -- -- *chief priest to his people, dynastic instrument to his forebears, promoter of civilization, upholder of the classics, and exemplar and father to his people.*”(Seth, 2006, p. 182) but his station as the model of Confucian conduct also restricted him, and it was usually the yangban who actually dominated the society. (Seth, 2006, pp. 152, 182).

Appendix B



CosmoLearning (2008) Available at: <https://cosmolearning.org/images/korea-unified-silla-and-balhae-8th-century/> [Accessed 17.10.18]

The Goryeo Dynasty (11th century)



CosmoLearning (2008) Available at: <https://cosmolearning.org/images/korea-map-of-goryeo-dynasty-11th-century/> [Accessed 17.10.18]

The Joseon Dynasty (15th century)



CosmoLearning (2008) Available at: <https://cosmolearning.org/images/korea-map-of-joseon-dynasty-15th-dynasty/> [Accessed 17.10.18]

Appendix C

Summary of Korean War

The Korean War was both an international conflict and a bitter civil war which grew out from the country's colonial experience and forceful separation by outside forces. The war began in 25th of June in 1950 when North Korean military forces suddenly crossed the inter-Korean border and advanced rapidly towards South Korea's capital Seoul. The ROK forces managed to defend Seoul for two days before they started to crumble before better equipped and trained KPA forces. The United States reacted quickly, president Truman gave general MacArthur permission to use U.S. air and naval forces to support ROK and went to the United Nations calling for a resolution which would give the United States an authority to intervene the situation. The "Resolution 84⁷⁰" was adopted on 7th of July and the UN Security Council established a unified military command under the United States. By early August the ROK had shrunk to a small area around Pusan in the southeast corner of the country, but enough of the UN forces had arrived to bring the war into a stalemate. The tides of war changed with general MacArthur's surprise landing at Inch'ŏn which outflanked and trapped the KPA, and The United States' and ROK forces fought their way back to Seoul. The KPA was largely driven to a total disarray by late September and on October 3rd the Chinese premier warned the United States that if they crossed the 38th parallel Chinese forces would be compelled to enter the war. The United States' and ROK forces however crossed the 38th parallel to North Korea on MacArthur's and Syngman Rhee's initiative, against the UN resolution which had only authorized repelling North Koreans from the South. On October 7th Washington gave MacArthur permission to destroy all KPA forces and the UN passed another resolution which allowed the use of UN troops to cross the parallel for the sake of establishing a unified government. The UN and ROK forces rolled KPA back and took over Pyongyang forcing the DPRK's government to flee the city. The victory seemed to be at hand when China joined the war, and the UN forces were pinned down when Chinese and North Korean troops began to attack from the front and the rear. On 6th of December communist forces regained Pyongyang, two weeks later the whole North Korea, and in 4th of January Seoul. UN forces were driven back to 37th parallel where they regrouped and stopped the Chinese and managed to push them back and retake Seoul on March 15th. The war came to a stalemate in spring 1951 with the peninsula divided approximately where it had been before the outbreak of the war, and the representatives of the Chinese People's Volunteers, the KPA, and the UN command met to negotiate an armistice in July 1951. The war however continued until July 1953, partly because the question about repatriation of the prisoners of war turned out to be major obstacle in the negotiations, and a ceasefire agreement was achieved and signed only on 27th of July 1953.

⁷⁰ <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/112027> [accessed 28.3.19]

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